December 2000

From: John Morrison, RVCOG

Date: December 12, 2000

Attendees: *Solution Team members present*: Jeff Graham; Pam Lind; Eric Neidermeyer; Brian Dunn; Reeve Hennion; Alex Georgevitch; Julie Brown; Robin Marshall; Jim Oldland; Greg Holthoff; Dan Moore; Mark McQueen Mark Ashby.
Solution Team Members absent: Mike Burrill; Mark Gallagher; Skip Knight.

Re: DRAFT SOLUTION TEAM MEETING MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 6, 2000
Location: ODOT/Jackson County Annex Conference Room, 200 Antelope Road, White City.

Guests: Mike Hawkins; Laurie, Bob and Bon Dysart; Pat and Tom Oldenburg; Rob Patridge; Jerry Lane, OBEC; Karen Smith, Jackson Co. Parks; Scott Chancey, RVTD.

Project Team Present: David Mayfield, URS; Mike Falini, URS; Frank Stevens, ODOT; John Morrison, RVCOG.

1.0 Call to Order/Approval of Minutes
Frank Stevens called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM. He welcomed the public, and introduced Pam Lind and Eric Neidermeyer who will represent Jackson County on the Team. He then reviewed the agenda and asked for approval of minutes of the previous meeting. There was one correction under item 7, page 4, "Comments from the Public. The word ODOT was omitted from Line 5 which should read… "….the state will design to ODOT design standards…" Minutes were approved unanimously as corrected.

2.0 Citizen Input
There was no initial citizen input. Frank Stevens said an additional opportunity for public input would be available toward the end of the meeting.

3.0 Citizen Advisory Committee Report
CAC facilitator John Morrison reported that the CAC on November 15 conducted three items of business: 1) received an update on the significant developments in traffic modeling for the No Build, Highland and Ellendale alternatives; 2) received a presentation on Transit options as they might potentially impact the project; and 3) heard a NEPA process update by Mike Gallagher of URS. Morrison said the CAC was not comfortable with the scale of the improvements needed to make the remaining alternatives workable solutions and the expected results in view of the projected costs. Morrison he was in the process of polling individual CAC members as to their concern and suggestions. A memo of the results of that polling will be presented to the Solution Team and the CAC at its next meeting.

4.0 Purpose of Meeting
Dave Mayfield said the purpose of the meeting is to review the traffic analysis that has been conducted for the 2030 projection. He also noted that the project Team is doing minor design changes that Mike Falini will cover. Also will be discussing multi-modal features and preparations for the February meeting. He said the Team wants to know where we are going as soon as possible. We will try to select the preferred alternative by the February meeting. Mayfield said he would discuss later what the Team needs to do to accomplish this. Also at the February meeting would be a discussion of whether the project would require an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Study (EIS).

5.0 Designing for Projected Traffic
Mike Falini then discussed the changes that need to be made to meet 2030 mobility requirement needs. The Highland alternative would require separate left and through lanes. Hwy 99 at Stewart, northbound 99 would need a double left to westbound Stewart. Garfield and 99 would need a southbound double left to eastbound Belnap. He also mentioned that on the Highland alternative, the Center Street alignment might move somewhat. He also discussed the alignment of the bike path as it is designed to run under Highland, under I-5 at Bear Creek and then back under the Highland/Garfield extension west of I-5. There was discussion of the benefits of a tunnel for the bike path versus a longer ride. Dave Mayfield said this is in part a community preference issue. He said the current alignment was chosen to avoid dissecting parcels of property.

There was discussion of how many lanes would be required at Barnett at Ellendale. There was a question if there would be five lanes or six. Alex Georgevitch said the group might want to revisit this in the future.

6.0 Project Related Transit Needs.
Scott Chancey presented an overview of present bus service levels and usage. He presented projections through the year 2020 given present service levels and various potential changes to service. RVTD has 756,000 bus boardings per year, removing 260,000 car trips from local roads annually. Boardings could increase to nearly 7 million annually by 2020 if service frequency could be increased to optimum. Usage has dropped since RVTD cut service and increased fares two years ago due to funding reductions. Unless RVTD receives more funding, service would have to be cut more by 2020. In particular, routes extending out to the east and west of I 5 would be eliminated.

An optimum level of service would offer maximum waits of 10-15 minute, and cost the district $18 million annually. About $4 million of that would come from fares. Additionally, RVTD has studied developing park-ride facilities, but they appear not to be feasible at this time. They may be too expensive and offer too little service to the public to get used. Other programs RVTD is pursuing include voucher programs in which businesses and agencies buy bus service for their employees, increasing ridership. Companies earn a tax credit for the service. RVTD also offers a car pool match program

RVTD is using a $170,000 grant to upgrade system, including bus shelters and improved signs, which Chancy expects will draw more bus riders. The district is moving from having a central station to a series of smaller transfer stations to ease traffic congestion throughout its service area. the RVTD information is being used in developing the multi-modal element of the project, including public transit facilities/routes, pedestrians, bicyclists and Bear Creek Greenway bike path features.

Mark Ashby asked if the Solution Team will determine if the alternatives are conducive to multi-modal transportation. Dave Mayfield said the Team would keep the process open, and hear community preferences. Chancey said at this point, the emphasis is on providing bike and ped…transit will tie in later as the situation develops,

7.0 Update on environmental studies.
Dave Mayfield reported that air quality modeling shows no hot spots and arrears not to exceed standards. Archeological crews found no architectural sites identified. Some evidence of prehistoric activities, but not much of importance. The survey has included test pits for a below surface level examination.

In natural resource impacts, there is an interest by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in protecting threatened and endangered species. Highland alternative appears to have less impact on Bear Creek, the Greenway and parks than does Ellendale Alternative. No HazMat results yet.

Socio-Economic Impacts: Study still underway. Appears to be more displacement of disadvantaged residential housing with the Ellendale alternative.

Dave Mayfield then distributed copies of the project Goals and Evaluation Criteria. He said that a comparison of the relative values of the two remaining alternatives when compared to the criteria having the highest value sowed little difference. The implication is that we have two winners…both alternatives perform well. In February, he said we might expect to go over the Evaluation Criteria again to begin to develop some differentiation. Reeve Hennion asked if it wouldn't be best to zero in on those criteria where there's the most difference in order to develop a shorter list. Mayfield sad one method would be to look at the criteria the regulatory would be the most concerned with.; wetlands issues, Greenway (4f), and stream impacts. Housing and connectivity impacts would also be important.

Hennion said we shouldn't go too far in tossing the list. Mayfield said some criteria appear to be a "wash",…that they are not for that reason good differentiators. Brian Dunn said he would like to see the Team go ahead and run them just to confirm the "wash." Mayfield said we could do this; only a dozen or so would tell the tale.

The question was raised on whether or not to go into the EA or EIS with a preferred alternative. The Team agreed that by the next meeting they would like all the information possible on the comparison of all three alternatives (including the no build) to the Evaluation Criteria. A decision of a preferred alternative is to be expected in February that could be carried into the EA/EIS. Also at the Feb meeting, URS would make a recommendation on whether an EA or EIS would be more appropriate. Fransk Stevens said ODOT and FHWA would make the actually decision on which process to use.

8.0 Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs

Michael Ronkin of ODOT gave a presentation of general information of bike and pedestrian guidelines. He focused on the specific needs for bike and ped accommodation and the difficulties presented by interchanges., and presented a list of features for good intersection design. Mark McQueen asked about local signals and signal timing. Ronkin said engineers are working on new designs to be more informative for timing signal cycles.

9.0 Meeting Critique

The Solution Team expressed comfort with project progress, were looking forward to the February meeting. The bike and ped information was deemed especially helpful.

10.0 Next Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2001. The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.