June 1999

From: John Morrison

Date: June 6, 1999

Attendees: Solutions Team members present: Dan Moore, Joe Strahl, Jim Oldland, Reeve Hennion, Mike Burrill, Julie Brown, Bill Walton (for Skip Knight), Robin Marshall, Greg Holtoff, Mark Ashby, Mark Gallagher, Brian Dunn, Lisa Owens, Franks Stevens, Mark McQueen and Laurel Prairie-Kuntz.

Re: Minutes of the June 2, 1999, meeting of the South Medford Interchange Solutions Team.

Location: ODOT Conference Room B&C, 200 Antelope Rd., White City.

Guests: Elton Chang, FHWA.

Consultant Team Present: David Mayfield and Mike Falini, URS; Jim Hanks, JRH Transportation Engineering; John Morrison, Rogue Valley Council of Governments ; Terry Kearns, BRW.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER
Frank Stevens opened the meeting at 9:00 AM. He told the group that Bill Walton, Vice-Chair of the MPO would be filling in for Skip Knight who is out of town at a national transportation meeting.

2.0 Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
Minutes of the May 6, 1999, Workshop meeting were unanimously approved without change.

3.0 Public Comment
There was no public comment offered.

4.0 Review, Evaluation and Reworking of Alternative Concepts
Frank Stevens opened the day's work by reminding the Team that it is at an important point in the process. The Group now needs to move forward in identifying and refining solutions concepts. Dave Mayfield handed out an "evaluation sheet" (attached) which scores each of the 13 alternative design concepts developed in the May 6 workshop on how well they address significant transportation issues. Each alternative was given a high, medium or low rating on the following factors: increases interchange capacity; maintains/enhances safety and integrity of the transportation system; reduces traffic volumes at the interchange; offers better N-S connections, west side; offers better N-S connections, east side; better E-W connections; reduces signal delay; minimizes out of direction travel; and compatibility with other modes.

Mike Falini then showed a brief video on single point urban interchanges and their benefits. The use of single point interchange design is among the alternative concepts being considered for the South Medford Solutions project. Benefits include minimal right of way, less need for signalization, elimination of queueing, and an overall design that is compatible with the urban environment. Falini pointed out that this type of interchange may have utility for the South Medford Interchange because it can allow signal lights to be pulled in closer and still facilitate high volume traffic movement.

5.0 PRESENTATIONS OF CONCEPTS
Dave Mayfield walked the Solution Team through a review and critique of the 13 alternatives concepts developed in the May 6 Alternatives Workshop. Solutions Team members discussed each concept, asked questions and than collectively decided whether the concept had significant merit to "stand alone" for further review and refinement, or that it did not demonstrate sufficient potential on its own, but might be "folded" into another of the designs as an enhancement feature. In the end, 6 alternative concepts were decided to have "stand alone" qualities, and were rated for further consideration by the Team
5.1 Alternative #1 – E-W Connecting Roads: with Single Point Urban Interchange on existing bridge location.

Mayfield told the group this design would require a slight move to the north for the interchange, but this would keep Barnett Road open during construction. By connecting Barnett to Stewart, E-W traffic flow would be increased. A Garfield to Ellendale freeway overpass connection would pull traffic away from the interchange. The design also showed a South Stage Road over pass, which is located at the mid point between the existing Barnett Road and Fern Valley Road interchanges, might someday be qualified to develop into another interchange. Given current policy for interchange spacing, it would not qualify. The Team felt that given the environmentally sensitive nature of the S. Stage Road overpass area, it would be better to mike this a corridor study are, not an actual alignment which would be too restrictive under these conditions. Laurel Prairie-Kuntz pointed out the east extension of the crossing as ing it would go through an area designated for future golf course expansion, and this would pose a significant obstacle.

It was stressed that on this alternative concept it is important to keep options open, including possible moving the Garfield to Ellendale connection to Highland instead. It was decided that #1 should remain as a "stand alone" alternative concept.
5.2 Alternative #2 – E-W Connecting Roads: with Single Point Urban Interchange at Garfield and Ellendale.

He alternative would create an urban single point interchange at the point that a Garfield to Ellendale connector crosses the interstate. Barnett would be a freeway over pass, not an interchange. Advantages: improve E-W traffic flow on Barnett; eliminates E-W local use of freeway interchange. Disadvantage: would probable preclude a later addition of a South Stage Road Interchange; does not have a Barnett- Stewart connection. This was suggested as a possible addition/refinement to this alternative. Mike Burrill pointed out that this plan could have a major impact on existing businesses in the Stewart/Barnett area because it routes much of the traffic elsewhere. After some discussion it was decided that this concept might work better by moving it to the north so that Highland would be the connection on the east side rather than Ellendale. Ellendale would be retained for additional N-S connectivity. Alternative # 2 as refined was seen as something of a new proposal with "stand alone" possibilities. Because South Stage is show, it would still have the problem of running into the proposed golf course.

5.3 Alternative #3 - E-W Connecting Roads: South Stage Connections
This was seen as a low impact alternative that doesn't solve the interchange problem. Its elements are covered in Alternatives #1 & #2. The Team voted to strike this option because it is covered in other options.

5.4 Alternative #4 – E-W Connecting Roads: One Way pair/Split Interchange, Concept 1.
This proposal would require a great deal more land for improvement to the existing interchange. It was not seen as a workable alternative because of several drawbacks. Access to Fred Meyer property was negligible; the northbound off ramp at Highland has

potential for people getting on freeway going the wrong way; traffic storage of the couplet is inadequate. The Team voted unanimously to eliminate the alternative as having too many negatives and too few benefits.

5.5 Alternative # 5 – E-W Connecting Roads - One Way pair/Split Interchange, Concept 2.
This alternative was seen as having heavy environmental impacts; had a lot of out of direction travel and is incompatible with other modes of travel (pedestrian & bike). There was concern that the west end of the one way couplet would impact the Oakdale Ave. historic area. Also would have significant impact on business in the McGrath's area. The team questioned just how significant this alternative concept would be in solving the problem. It was seen as a "stand alone", but not as one having a lot of potential. Others appear to offer better solutions.

5.6 Alternative #6 – Land Use
This alternative grew out of the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) study concepts of land use changes to impact transportation needs. It was seen as having some potential for N-S connectivity, but the potential for the creation of a major intersection between Central and Riverside is seen as a major flaw. It was seen as not addressing South Stage Road or the freeway problems at all. It appeared to do little in the way of alleviating the problems, might even create some. The Team voted that is was not good as a stand alone, but that the element might be incorporated in some way into other alternatives.

5.7 Alternative #7 – South Medford Interchange: Stewart/Barnett and Garfield/Highland Connections.

This alternative is seen as a variation to the existing interchange., with a re-orientation of traffic movement from Barnett to Stewart. Mayfield said the drawing had an error as shown, and would create too much left turn traffic on Riverside. This would need to be redrawn, and there would b a need to do a model rune to get the numbers on this alternative before its effectiveness could be determined. Other drawbacks to the concept mentioned that additional N-S connectivity might be needed, and South Stage might need to be included. This was seen as a "stand alone" concept, but one very similar to Option #1, with #1 offering what appears to be greater utility in addressing the problems at the interchange.

5.8 Alternative #8 – South Medford Interchange: Single Point Interchange Concept.
This alternative is seen as a good stand alone interchange concept, but shows some heavy impacts to South Gateway business area (hard to achieve access to Fred Meyer) and at the Stewart/Center intersection. It also needs help with N-S connectivity. Overall, this alternative appears to have high socio-economic impacts.

5.9 Alternative #9 – South Medford Interchange: Garfield/Highland Connection; Single Point Interchange at Highland/Barnett.

This alternative would utilize three interchanges: keep I-5/Barnett as a SPUI, add another SPUI at Highland/Barnett and add a partial interchange at Garfield and Center. This might be seen as overkill. A simple overpass at Highland was seen as a possible simpler alternative, An at-grade intersection with a signal at Garfield and Central might suffice. The Team decided this alternative is not a "stand alone" and would only consider it if the Garfield/Highland overpass concept appears to need additional improvement.

5.10 Alternative #10 – South Medford Interchange: Add sidewalk and bike and traffic lanes.
This alternative was voted by the Team to be treated not as a "stand alone" concept, but as elements which should be added to the other designs as appropriate.

5.11 Alternative #11 – N-S Connecting Roads: Interchanges at Garfield/Highland and South Stage Road.

This alternative featured a new N-S connection concept of Portland Avenue/Crater Lake Avenue link as well as a South Stage (E-W) to North Phoenix Road (N-S) segment that reflects a "belt line" concept that has been promoted over the years as a way of alleviating Medford Traffic congestion. Refinements suggested included possibly sliding the S. Stage interchange to the south slightly, and possible making the S. Stage crossing just an overpass with no interchange capability. This was seen as similar to Alternative #2. The Team consensus was that alternative #11 is a stand alone and that the S. Stage interchange should be retained for modeling.

5.12 Alternative #12 – N-S Connecting Roads: Biddle extension
This alternative proposed increased N-S connection by creating an extension of Biddle Road through the old K-mart location to connect to Center Drive. The utility of this alternative is contingent on a number of other proposed options. The Team decided it was not a "stand alone", and might be kept for consideration as to its ability to enhance or contribute to one of the "stand alone" alternatives.

5.13 Alternative #13 – N-S Connecting Roads: Crater Lake/Portland extension.
Another alternative that did not have "stand alone" capability. This alternative might has utility within some other alternative of wider scope. The utility of an extension of this kind depends on number of lanes and lane width. The team decided that none of these alternatives should be eliminated, but that the consultant team should play with these as they do the modeling runs to see how they might be attached to other options. Brian Dunn pointed out that this might be a good exercise, but the Team should be cautioned that the model may not show a lot of difference between options which are located close to one another due to little difference in drive times.

5.14 Voting on the Options
Each team member was given three stickers indicating 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice and asked to vote on which of the six "stand alone" options they preferred)Alternatives #1, #2, #5, #7, #8 and #11. Results shown here.

Alternative	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
#11	7	3	3	13
# 1	5	4	3	12
# 2	3	4	5	12
# 7	0	3	3	6
# 8	0	1	0	1
# 5	0	0	0	0

6.0 MEETING CRITIQUE
Frank Stevens asked each participant to critique the day's activities, and especially each Team member's comfort level with the amount of information and the way it was presented.

Comments:

"This was a good step, but we still have a long way to go."

"This was a significant step, but when we get the model, we will still have a lot of work to do."

"I'm getting more comfortable with the information being presented, and I think it's a good idea that we will be modeling the N-S alternatives before we drop any."

"It was a little confusing."

"It is important to keep in mind the Medford city grid pattern as we discuss alternatives."

"I'm in overload, but Ill work through it."

"Shouldn't we bring the City of Medford in. Our success here hinges on their plans."

"This was a good screening process. There' still much to build in, including the political will to implement."

"It is good to see street connectivity being addressed in this way, not just being talked about."

7.0 MEETING ADJOURNED

Given the length of the discussion, time did not permit getting to the final agenda item, Draft Evaluation Criteria. That item was deferred until next meeting. Group adjourned for a lunch presentation by Elton Chang and Nick Forte of FHWA.

Next meeting will be held on July 7, 1999, from 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM at the ODOT Conference Room, 200 Antelope road, White City.