

## **March 1999**

**Location:** ODOT Conference Room

**Members Present:** Joe Strahl, Lisa Owens, Mark Gallagher, Skip Knight, Brian Dunn, Greg Holthoff, Mark Ashby, Robin Marshall, Mark McQueen, Reeve Hennion, Julie Brown, Frank Stevens, Jim Oldland, Ivan Marrero.

**Members Absent:** Mike Burrill, Tim Murphy, Dan Moore, Laurel Prairie-Kuntz,

**Guests:** Scott McCanna/ODOT, Cory Crebbin, Medford Public Works

**Consultant Team Present:** Jim Hanks, JRH Transportation Engineering; Gary Shaff, JRH Transportation Engineering; John Morrison, RVCOG.

### **1. Call to Order**

Frank Stevens opened the meeting at 9:00 AM.

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from previous meeting were approved without correction.

### **3. Public Comment**

None.

### **4. Citizens Advisory Committee Report**

John Morrison gave an overview of the Citizen Advisory Committee selection process, and a report on the initial partnering meeting for the Committee held Thursday, Feb. 25. Morrison said the CAC was selected from respondents to a mailing to approximately 500 property owners, residents, business owners, representatives of interest groups and others. The mailing included a questionnaire asking for citizen input on the South Medford Interchange area. There were about 100 responses (20% return on original mailing) of which half expressed interest in serving on the CAC. A committee comprised of Morrison, Dave Mayfield (URS Greiner) and Frank Stevens selected 19 candidates who would be contacted to further identify their interest in serving on the CAC. There were people from both side of the freeway, representing a broad base of interests, including, commuters, the environment, parks, bicyclists, seniors, students, persons with disabilities and low income, and safety advocates.

Seventeen agreed to serve on the Committee and attended the partnering session which gave the members an opportunity to meet on another, learn their roles and responsibilities and learn more about the project. One question that came up, Morrison said, was how would the Solutions Team receive input from the CAC. The group wanted assurance that its recommendations would be heard by the Solutions Team. Morrison then distributed suggestions from the CAC on the draft Solution Team Goals. Reeve Hennion said the input from the CAC was very valuable and helpful and it and additional input from the CAC would be well received by the Solutions Team. The next meeting of the CAC will be held Wednesday, April 21 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Morrison also reminded the Solutions team of the public Open House/Scoping meeting for the project coming up March 18, at the Medford Scottish Rite Building, and urged all to attend.

## **5. Origin and Destination Study**

Jim Hanks reviewed the study and the available results. Some findings:

- 44% of southbound Hwy 62 traffic getting on freeway at north interchange gets off at South Medford Interchange.
- About the same percentage of traffic on I-5 southbound from Rogue Valley Mall gets off at South Medford Interchange.
- About 37% of traffic east bound on Barnett crosses over the freeway to get to the East Side.
- The point of origin that uses the South Interchange ramps the most is the right turn at Stewart onto Barnett.

Overall implications: The interchange is used substantially for local destination travel even though it is an interstate facility. Solutions to the interchange problem may be well served to look outside the interchange area, and to providing opportunities for people to get from point to point without using the interchange.

Hanks said that connectivity is a major issue. Frank Stevens mentioned that the South Medford Interchange project, the Hwy 62 Corridor Project and the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study for the MPO area are all relevant to the search for traffic congestion solutions. Hanks noted that making the Interstate less attractive for local traffic may be a complimentary strategy. Because of traffic demand brought on by developing properties, Hanks said, there are substantial barriers to connectivity.

Hennion suggested that the political will may be lacking to improve local connectivity. Hanks said trying to get better connectivity without huge impacts may not yet have been looked at.

Skip Knight said political will is at least partially a function of necessity. The city council is committed to a better committee he said. The people recognize the need to do something. If benefits can be demonstrated, he said, a solution can be reached. He also mention that Senators Gordon Smith and Ron Wyden are committed to coming up with funds to support improvements at the South Medford Interchange.

Hanks said the vision of the city may have to be changed to permit looking at options that historically may have been dismissed.

Mark Gallagher said this analysis will look at local off-system improvements that could meet the needs of improved connectivity and which will improve function of the S. Medford Interchange for less dollars.

## **6. Transportation Planning Rule**

Gary Shaff gave the group a brief overview of the state Transportation Planning Rule and the impacts it may have on the South Medford Interchange Project process. Shaff said TPR goals must be integrated into this project. DLCDC will review the project and hold it to moving toward the goal of 10% in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs).

Hanks said this would not be easy. Only three times in history VMTs went down: 1) the Depression, 2) WWII, and 3) the 1973 Oil Embargo.

The question is how to build VMT reductions into a plan if level of service is to be maintained. Better connectivity and providing alternatives to driving are two ways. Mixed land use strategies, don't eliminate the problems as well as we might like Hanks said. It was suggested that the Solutions Team needs a presentation in a future meeting on land user and transportation plans...what they do, how they interrelate. This might take the form of a "cheat sheet" on all the area plans and how they relate. What are the elements of a plan, who has the authority, how do they fit together? The issue revolves around the relationship of any proposal to existing plans.

## **7. Mission Statement**

Jim Hanks suggested some language changes to the Solution Team's draft Mission Statement. Group agreed to Hanks' suggestions. Mission Statement revised to read: "The mission of the South Medford Interchange Solutions Team is to identify, in a timely manner, the best possible solution for the South Medford Interchange. This is being done with the understanding there is a need to develop solutions in a broad context of community and statewide needs and perspectives."

## **8. Evaluation Criteria for Transportation Goals**

Jim Hanks led a discussion of the Solution Team Goals and how Evaluation Criteria might be developed to assess how options meet the goals. Team will work on criteria. Will also review goals in light of comments and suggestions from The CAC. Solutions team will think the Goals over, and clean them up next meeting. Outcome will be communicated to the CAC.

## **9. MURA Concerns**

Jim Hanks reported that he had met with Don Burt to discuss MURA concerns that there is nothing specific written into the South Medford Interchange project that will look into ways to preserve business in downtown. Downtown is concerned that the project may make it easier for South Gate merchants to compete with downtown.

Hanks said that the Project will look at the impact on the Medford Community as a whole and that includes downtown. The O&D show that downtown is a significant destination within the community so must be included in the study. Also, downtown development will reduce VMT, which is good for the Project. And the Project will identify a number of solutions options which will minimize congestion, and substantially improve downtown access.

## **10. Coordination with other projects.**

Hanks said there are currently four primary Transportation projects going on in the Medford area: 1) Hwy 62 Corridor Project, 2) THE South Medford Interchange Project, 3) The TOD Study, and 4) the S. Interchange Allocation Study.

There is a lot of overlap in the projects and some of the work being done can be used in more than one effort. (The O&D can be used in both South Medford interchange and the Hwy 62 . Connectivity gains in those two projects can enhance the success of the TOD effort. Paul Morris, consultant on the TOD Study will give a presentation during lunch on April 7 between the South Medford and Hwy 62 Solution Team meetings that will discuss how the three projects can work together.

## **11. Meeting Critique**

The Solution Team was generally very pleased with the meeting and the information presented. Group was pleased with input from CAC, results of the O&D Study, and the effort to integrate the several transportation projects where possible. It was suggested it would be good to have a large map of the problem area posted during the meetings, and that once they are adopted, the Team's Goals should be posted as well. It was also suggested that if any thing was to be required of an individual Solution Team member at a meeting, they should be notified well ahead of time.

## **12. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, April 7, 1999, from 9:00 to 11:30 am in Conference Rooms B and C at the ODOT Building in White City.