

November 1999

From: John Morrison

Date: November 8, 1999

Attendees: Solution Team members present: Frank Stevens, Mike Burrill, Jim Oldland, Robin Marshall, Greg Holthoff, Mark McQueen, Brian Dunn, Joe Strahl, Mark Ashby, Reeve Hennion, Lisa Owen, Skip Knight, Mark Gallagher and Mathew Barnes (for Julie Brown). Solution Team members absent: Julie Brown, Dan Moore.

Re: SOLUTION TEAM MEETING MINUTES

FOR NOVEMBER 3RD, 1999

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

Guests: Elton Chang, FHWA; citizens Bon Dysart; Kristy Dysart; Bob Dysart; David Bolen; Pat Oldenburg; Tom Oldenburg; Heidi Jacobson

Consultant Team Present: David Mayfield, URS; Terry Kearns, BRW; John Morrison, RVCOG.

1.0 Call to Order

Frank Stevens called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM.

2.0 Approval of August Minutes

Minutes of the October 6, 1999, Solution Team meeting were approved without comment.

3.0 Public Comment

Guest Bon Dysart expressed concerns about the October 6 Solution Team meeting. He said that after voting several members expressed that they might have voted differently given new information. He added that he felt there was not enough education prior to the voting process. Dysart also mentioned that he felt the process might have been biased during the instruction on weighting when examples were given that expressed how one might vote. Dave Mayfield responded that a large part of today's meeting would be devoted to a review of that meeting so that if there were any doubts they could be addressed. He also mentioned that the re-voting issue was restricted to just one particular measure which would be reviewed today as well. Frank Stevens added that the Evaluation criteria are not yet at closure. The Solution Team would be working toward that today. Member Reeve Hennion added that he was comfortable with the direction that had been developed that day, but he welcomed the opportunity to review the process to make sure that the analysis was correct.

Citizen Pat Oldenburg asked to clarify terminology for the Solution Team. She said people often talk about a belt line to alleviate congestion. She said it is often assumed that this would be a "freeway" around Medford. This is not the case she said. It is arterials we are referring to.

4.0 Feedback from Citizen Advisory Committee

John Morrison reported that a large number of citizens turned out for the October 20, 1999 CAC meeting. Draft minutes of the meeting were included in the Solution Team packets. Morrison said those who spoke at the CAC meeting were mostly interested in expressing

their opposition to any alternative that would go through the Groveland/Ellendale neighborhood. Morrison said that CAC Chair Jon Deason presented an overview of the October 6 Solution Team workshop on evaluation criteria. Deason expressed that he had been very impressed with the thoroughness and technical nature of the weighting process. Morrison reported that two members of the public, Pat Oldenburg and Norbert Liebert who had attended the October 6 meeting also shared their views on the days events with the CAC. Morrison said that the CAC did not have enough time to go over the weighting exercise thoroughly, and that as a result, a follow up exercise was mailed to them. He said Dave Mayfield would give a report on the outcome during his presentation.

Morrison also reported that a redoubled effort to reach more members of the public in neighborhoods that have less often been heard from was under way. These neighborhoods include the Portland Avenue area, the Garfield Avenue area and the Springbrook area to the north. A mail campaign will begin this week to reach residents and homeowners. Other methods, including door to door delivery and newspaper may be used to reach households hard to reach through mail. Morrison also mentioned that the CAC had heard a presentation by Medford Planning Director Jim Eisenhard on Medford's plans that might have an impact on land use. The presentation gave CAC members an overview of what was planned and how it might impact the South Medford Interchange.

5.0 Identifying Project Hurdles

Frank Stevens then led the Solution Team through a "double reversal" exercise to help identify project hurdles. The Solution Team was asked first to list every way possible that might make the project fail. The following were put forth:

1. Failure to meet economic goals
2. Not following the NEPA process
3. A lack of funding
4. Using the wrong assumptions
5. Political pressure to protect special interests
6. Not maintaining or staying on schedule
7. Inconsistency with Medford's TSP
8. Inconsistency with adopted RTP
9. Lack of project knowledge by citizens and the public
10. Lack of political will...no support by the community
11. If the model shows no proposed solutions work.
12. Solution relies on capacity enhancement (building more lanes) but exceeds air quality standards
13. Vehicle miles traveled not reduced
14. Coming up with an auto-oriented solution that focuses more on the needs of vehicles, not on the movement of people or goods and services
15. Not being able to establish public understanding of project's need
16. Being too restrictive and missing an important alternative
17. Failure to consider transit, including bus rapid transit
18. Discouraging transit as a result of road improvements
19. Solution is not acceptable from an environmental regulatory standpoint (4(f), wetlands as examples)
20. Future expansion not adequately considered – lack of future flexibility

At this point, the group took a break to watch a new video on South Medford Interchange produced by the project's Public Involvement team.

6.0 Addressing Project Hurdles

Discussion began with the question...What is the Solution Team's definition of failure? The Team came up with several points:

- Not meeting our mission and goals
- Not solving safety issues (such as the backup onto the freeway)
- Not ameliorating the congestion problem at the interchange
- No action at the end of the process (No-build would be a failure)
- Developing a solution that was worse than doing nothing

Failure was summarized as: "we did not come up with a solution to the congestion problem at the interchange."

Frank Stevens then resumed the "double reversal exercise by asking the group to assess how well we are addressing the failure issues outlined in the first part of the exercise.

1. Are we addressing economic goals? Consensus: the alternatives analysis process is addressing this issue.
2. Are NEPA concerns being met? The modeling process is addressing "avoidance" of environmental resources by first trying to solve the problem with low-impact or no-impact solutions. Discussion: Environmental justice might be a problem, although this is being dealt with in the Evaluation Process. Any non-compliance problems (404) must be documented as to why – this is URS' responsibility. This issue might come into play if an alternative crosses the Bear Creek Greenway or Hawthorne Park. Consensus: we're in pretty good shape with this a one.
3. Problem: lack of funding. Discussion: Funding has not been allocated. ODOT is looking for it. The responsibility of this project is to provide a study that provides fundable solutions, not the funds. Concern expressed. Will the preferred solution we come up with be changed at the funding level or process? Mark Ashby reminded the Team that they had decided early on to initially explore all options with out regard for cost...that comes later. Dave Mayfield pointed out that funding consideration is part of the evaluation criteria. Greg Holthoff said there is a danger if too much time goes by between completion of the Environmental Impact Study and the beginning of construction. Mike Burrill said a funding package is in place if the new Gas Tax bill is successfully implemented – which is up to the voters.

At this point, Frank Stevens noted that the meeting was running behind schedule and asked the group if they would prefer to keep on with the double reverse exercise or go to the Review of the Evaluation Criteria. The group voted to go to the Evaluation criteria while it was still fresh in their minds, and will return to the double-reversal exercise at the next meeting.

7.0 Review/Modifications to October Solution Team Meeting Results

Dave Mayfield open the review with a recap of written comments on the Evaluation Criteria provided by CAC member Jim Buckley and Mark Bailey. Buckley had two points of concern. 1) concern for parks should go beyond just the Greenway, and 2) he feels Goal 9 (economic development) is weighted too high, saying that if the other goals are successful, this will be taken care of as a result. Bailey suggested a "grouping" of the Criteria which would then be ranked as follows.

Social Goals – 90

Transportation Goals – 80

Planning Goals – 75

Economic Goals – 75

Parks & Rec. Goals – 70

Environmental Goals – 60

Dave then showed the group a chart he produced which showed the combined weight of all Evaluation Measures using the Solution Team's weighting and Bailey's grouping method.

Mike Burrill said he felt the grouping chart does not give a correct portrayal of what the evaluation represented. Mark McQueen said he was concerned that the public perception would be that transportation is the primary goal and that's not what we're saying. After discussion, the Team decided to discard the chart because it could lead to misinterpretation of the Solution Team's intent.

Dave then led the Team through a review of how they had arrived at the relative values ranking.

Reeve Hennion said he feels the ranking stands as a good representation of the overall view of the group. He added that since there will be a chance to review it again (through sensitivity analysis) we should leave it as it is for now, but see how the weightings function. The Team agreed.

8.0 Meeting Critique

Frank Stevens then asked each member and guest how comfortable they were with the meeting. Among the comments were:

Team Input

"The bar chart just may be reflective of the group's view."

"The chart was an interesting exercise...a visual check of how the list stacked up."

"Comfortable with the process; good to see members of the public here."

"Good to see the citizen letters (in the packet)."

"We need to remember that the neighborhoods will change at some point. We need to make it as good as it can be."

Citizen Input

"There are still some disconnects...some of the needs and considerations are part of the problem. I am pleased with how the dynamic of the Solution Team works, It is good to see and I feel more confident with the process."

"Need to better define the economic goals."

9.0 Meeting Adjourned

Next meeting will be held from 9:00 to 11:30 AM on December 1, 1999, at the ODOT Conference Room, 200 Antelope Road, White City.