

October 2000

From: John Morrison, RVCOG

Date: October 12, 2000

Attendees: Solution Team members present: Dan Moore, Mark McQueen, Reeve Hennion, Brian Dunn, Mike Burrill, Greg Holthoff, Joe Strahl, Jim Oldland, Mark Ashby, Bob Deuel, Mark Gallagher, Alex Georgevitch, Robin Marshall. Solution Team Members absent: Jeff Graham, Skip Knight, Julie Brown.

Re: DRAFT SOLUTION TEAM MEETING MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 4, 2000

Location: ODOT/Jackson County Annex Conference Room, 200 Antelope Road, White City.

Guests: Gordon Davis, Mike Hawkins, Linda Wolford, Eric Stark, Melvin Scott, Laurie, Bob and Bon Dysart, Edward Healy, Pat Healey, William Staten, Rob Patridge.

Project Team Present: David Mayfield, URS; Mike Gallagher, URS; Mark Shippen, URS; Paul Coffelt, JRH; Jim Hanks, JRH; 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 Alex Georgevitch who will be taking Lisa Owens' position on the committee. He also introduced Mark Shippen from URS. He then reviewed the agenda and asked for approval of minutes of the previous meeting. Minutes were approved unanimously as written.

2.0 Citizen Input

Before opening the floor for public input, Frank Stevens asked the Team if it would like to change the time period reserved for public comment. He said there had been a suggestion that some people attending would like to provide input at the start of the meeting (in case they could not stay for the entire meeting), and at the end of the meeting as a rebuttal period. Reeve Hennion said he favored both. Some people may want to have their say without waiting; others may want to comment on what had taken place at the meeting. It was the consensus of the Team that the 10 minutes of public input time would be allocated to five minutes at the beginning of the meeting, and five minutes at the end.

Rob Patridge, representing Rogue Valley Manor, asked what was the status of the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Medford regarding a request for additional financing for the project. Frank reported that ODOT and the city are negotiating the "not to exceed figures" at this time. ODOT is also looking for other money in the process with the city.

Linda Wolford asked if the project is still going to have a decision on a preferred alternative by the first of the year, 2001. Frank Stevens said the need for adjustment and refinement of the traffic model had delayed the timeline. He said the Project Team realizes that people are waiting on the decision, which is now expected about May or June of 2001.

3.0 Citizen Advisory Committee Report

CAC facilitator John Morrison reported that the CAC had received a very preliminary version of the data the Solution Team would be reviewing. He distributed draft minutes for the CAC minutes. He said the CAC was not comfortable with what they see as a bleak picture in

terms of intersection failures by 2030, and the extent of mitigation which appeared necessary to make the remaining alternatives workable solutions. Morrison said the CAC was aware that further modeling was going on which might improve the picture.

4.0 Purpose of Meeting

Dave Mayfield said the purpose of the meeting is to review project process and progress. He mentioned that the traffic analysis had been delayed and that JRH staff has been working evening and nights to get the project together. He reiterated that the project team can't do the air quality, noise, and land use analysis without the traffic information.

5.0 Traffic Analysis and Access Management

Jim Hanks opened by reminding the Team of the project mission...to fix the problem at the I-5 interchange. Hanks then presented a traffic simulation based on 2030 projections at peak morning drive period under a no-build scenario. The simulation showed traffic queuing up on Barnett at the interchange west as far as the intersection with Highway 99 (Riverside) and east as far as Ellendale. He described it as a bleak picture.

Hanks mentioned that the project team has looked at many alternatives, many that do good things, but not always for the interchange. He said the team must follow the rules and standards required by ODOT and local jurisdictions, which means that traffic levels have to meet a volume-to-capacity ratio of .85 or less. On the interchange, the volume-to-capacity ratio must be .70. City of Medford standards must be used as well, requiring a level of service (LOS) in which total delay vs. capacity must meet level of service "D".

Hanks mentioned that he has to look at impacts off site as well. He can't let the project make anything else go below standard, or if already below standard, can't make it worse. He said there were other standards to be observed, i.e. freeway spacing standards. An exception can be asked for, but it is a tough test. Other applicable standards include air quality and noise, but fundamentally, it must work from the traffic level.

Hanks mentioned that the project must design for a 20-year life span from finished construction. Estimation that construction will be completed about 2010, adding a 20-year life span requires that modeling be done for 2030. He said air quality is important since the feds don't want a project that will degrade the AQ. In doing the projections, the team must focus on modeling with committed projects even though there are surely to be many more. He mentioned that this had been a concern of the CAC, that the traffic analysis doesn't factor in all that will be built-in. As suggested by the CAC, Barnett Road will be a city intersection, traffic patterns are readjusted to reflect actual traffic patterns.

Hanks then went over the Highland alternative. The Highland plan would place state intersection control at the Interchange, at Hwy 99/Garfield, at Garfield and Center and Hwy 99 and Stewart. Some design features would be the requirement for double left turn lanes at Barnett to N. Highland and S. Highland to Barnett west. Garfield and Stewart would also require a double left. Hanks said these features were doable and that he was comfortable that the Highland alternative provides a solution to the congestion problem at the interchange.

Hanks said the Ellendale intersection would be similar, but would not need a double left on Barnett N to Ellendale. The Ellendale Alternative has the fewest amount of lane add-ins. Hanks then discussed the Couplet Alternative that had earlier been "shelved" because of environmental and section 4 (f) considerations while traffic analysis continued. Reeve Hennion asked why are we still looking at it. Hanks replied that the Pfeiffer letter that challenged shelving the Couplet required a deeper look, and the Solution Team had said the

traffic analysis should continue. Hanks said traffic analysis shows the Couplet has two fatal flaws. (A) Too much traffic through Boyd to Riverside. Would require a triple left turn S. onto Riverside (the state rarely would allow a triple left) and would have to widen the right of way on Riverside. (B) Would need a triple right at Stewart & Barnett that would require an exception for the turn lanes. Also, ODOT policy does not like to have a street opposite an off ramp that the Couplet would require. Hanks said there were both safety and operational issues that create more problems than they solve. He added that there were land use problems, pedestrian problems, and that over all, the Couplet would create more capacity, but would also create more demand. After discussion, Joe Strahl moved the Couplet alternative be dropped from further consideration. Second by Mike Burrill. Vote was unanimous in favor.

6.0 RV Manor Master Plan and the Alternative.

Mike Gallagher gave the Solution Team an overview of his meeting with the Rogue Valley management staff and then went over the written response to the Manor's request for information.

Gallagher presented a map of the Manor's master Plan with an overlay of the Highland alternative. He pointed out some possible points of concerns: a) The alignment of the S. Highland extension "bulge-out" would be a problem; b) the Manor is anticipating using an elevated street to provide access to a restaurant at the west edge of its property. The fill proposed for the Highland alternative would cut off the restaurant. He said using fill in the flood plain would have to be addressed, and a hydraulics analysis would need to be done to determine the flood plain boundary. Gallagher said we might expand the Highland and Ellendale alternatives bridges to span the floodway. Right now the piers are in the floodway. Joe Strahl asked if Gallagher agrees with the FEMA floodway boundaries. He said there are areas where the boundary lines are having to be interpolated. Analysis is being done. Mike Burrill asked how FEMA gets its info...answer: they do their own studies and get secondary from Corps of Engineers. Mike Gallagher said the flood plain boundaries were more sketchy than the floodway. Bob Deuel said Medford uses FEMA maps.

Gallagher said the Ellendale alternative is least favored by the Manor.

It would impact the planned entrance, it would displace the driving range, it would require the widening of s. Ellendale, which would displace residences, businesses and parking. It would impact two wells, and have substantial circulation and displacements impacts.

In addressing Section 4 (f) issues, Gallagher said Ellendale has potentially greater impact than Highland. He said additional analysis is being done. He said increasing the amount of bridging may be beneficial. Joe Strahl said the county is now in the process of designing the Greenway from Barnett to S. Stage. He said this might give the appearance of being wasteful if the projects aren't coordinated. Dave Mayfield said we might be able to narrow down to one alternative. If there is compelling evidence, we can go into the EIS with a single preferred alternative. Gallagher said the Project Team will work together with the Greenway planning staff as well as possible.

7.0 Comments from the public

Rob Patridge commented that as the project looks at the final two alternatives, the City of Medford is looking at alternative mobility standards. He questioned just how high a standard the project must strive for, or how high it has to be. He suggests this be factored in. As the project moves ahead, should the city move ahead so the project doesn't have to meet the .85 standard? Brian Dunn said the state will design to design standards, not the mobility standards. Alternative mobility standards apply to existing situations, not new designs.

Mark Ashby said he was nervous about a 7-lane cross section for Barnett Road. Joe Strahl commented that Ellendale appears to show less congestion in 2030 than Highland. He wants to know why. (Jim Hanks said it is because Ellendale intersection does not go through to the north.) Mike Burrill said the "Taking" measure on the ballot might pass and we should take a look at the consequences

8.0 Meeting Critique

Frank Stevens then asked each member of the Solution Team if they were comfortable with the meeting and the progress being made. All Solution Team members expressed comfort with the process.

9.0 Next Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 6, 2000. The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.