

**Glencoe Interchange Project
Stakeholder Working Group meeting #1**

7-9 p.m. Wednesday, March 22, 2006
Jessie Mays Community Hall
30955 NW Hillcrest, North Plains

Meeting Summary

Project Staff:

Tom Braibish, Lili Gordon, Amy Gibbons, Tim Wilson, Steve Harry (ODOT)
Rick Kuehn, Pam Wheeler (CH2M HILL)
Jeanne Lawson, Kristin Hull, Kalin Schmoldt (JLA)
Matt Hughart (Kittelson Associates Inc.)
Abe Turki (Washington County)

SWG Members:

Robert "Butch" Kindel (Washington County Fire District #2)
Hal Ballard (Washington County Bicycle Transportation Coalition)
Wayne Holm (Oregon Canadian Forest Products)
Paul Coussens (Property Owner)
Tai Kim (Subway)
Clark Berry (NW ACT)
Robin Biden (Hillsboro School District)
Bob Jossy (Jossy Farms)
Stewart King (North Plains Chamber of Commerce)
Debbie Raber (City of Hillsboro)
Nick Kelsay (City of Forest Grove)
David Smith (North Plains Planning Commission)
Susie Anthony (CPO 8)
Marie Finegan (Washington County Farm Bureau)

Other Attendees:

Jeanne Holm, (Oregon Canadian Forest Products), Matt Hughart (Kittelson Associates),
Remi Coussens (Property Owner), Chet Walter, Cheri Olson (Mayor of North Plains), Rick
Dobbs

Welcome and introductions

Kristin Hull thanked all for coming to the first Stakeholder Working Group meeting. She briefly described her role as facilitator for the meetings which was followed by a short round of introductions where each person present described their relationship to the project.

Kristin reviewed the meeting agenda and passed out a committee roster.

Project introduction

Project purpose/overview

Tom Braibish gave a short presentation about the current project. Currently there are a variety of problems with the interchange at Glencoe Road. The road has limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The overpass has substandard vertical clearance and has short sight distances.

Traffic flow is the big problem. Mr. Brabish referred to a 2005 study that illustrated how the westbound exit and eastbound entrance ramps will fail by 2025. Mr. Brabish described the need for a fix which includes a wider overpass. He explained that project alternatives will look at things like providing a taller structure to provide clearance, expanding the road to three lanes, including a turn lane, and adding pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

Washington County has also identified the need for and funded a three lane roadway from the interchange through the intersection of West Union Avenue and Glencoe Street. This process also includes potential improvements such as turn lanes, new street lights, etc.

Mr. Brabish noted that the Washington County improvements could have been torn up to construct the ODOT improvements. Instead, ODOT will be working with Washington County to combine interchange improvements with the road improvements.

Mr. Brabish noted that the interchange designs are only in the study phase. He noted that ODOT is required to consider all viable alternatives because of the NEPA process. The question for the group to consider is “what is the preferred alternative?” The design process will provide ideas, but the SWG is going to be the tool for involving the community in the various design options. The design team will be relying on the SWG for input on how the various designs will affect the community. He anticipated the process proceeding for eight or nine months. CH2M HILL has been contracted for the project.

Schedule

Rick Kuehn passed out a simplified process chart and talked about the IAMP process. In addition to the Environmental Assessment which is required by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), there is also an Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP). The IAMP is a process used to ensure that when a major investment is made, it is compatible with local land use planning and will be functional in the 20 year life-frame.

Mr. Kuehn explained the content of the chart. The chart outlines the chronological flow of the project without using a specific timeline. The chart begins with outlining the need for studies establishing existing transportation problems, future transportation conditions, as well as environmental opportunities and constraints. Mr. Kuehn noted that there have been no specific impact studies yet, as there are no current designs. When more design specifics are known, studies of specific impacts will influence the development of alternatives.

The evaluation and screening process will follow the initial brainstorming phase. During this phase the SWG will help to establish how the various alternatives stack up against one another. The process will begin with a qualitative screening and be followed by a more specific quantitative screening. Ideally, this will yield one or two concepts which will be considered in an EA document.

The group will also help develop an Access Management Plan which considers how local access will be affected. The Access Management Plan will feed into the EA. Once a preferred alternative is selected, the IAMP will be adopted the involved jurisdictions.

The final step for the EA will be approval by the Federal Highway Administration of the Revised Environmental Assessment and issuance of a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact). The design team will work intensely with the SWG until the end of October, at which point the process moves becomes more technical in nature and consultation with the SWG will decrease.

A member asked about how quickly some alternatives may be eliminated and how many alternatives there may ultimately be to consider. Mr. Kuehn said that some alternatives may be eliminated quickly, and it's really impossible to know how many alternatives there may be at this point.

A member asked if there is currently a defined a study area. Mr. Kuehn responded that there is a physical study area and traffic impact study area which includes the area up to Gordon Road. Mr. Brabish noted that it's still very early in the process and there are no firmly defined areas at this time and areas will change depending on the design plans.

A member asked about projected travel forecasting for 2025. Matt Hughart noted that the traffic models all consider increasing traffic in the established planning horizon. Tom Brabish further noted that the project is only partially funded.

There were some other questions about the study areas, and Mr. Brabish told the group that the areas were still changing.

A member asked if Mr. Brabish was aware of any specific structural deficiencies with the overpass. Mr. Brabish didn't know specifically. Mr. Kuehn pointed out that the overpass is indisputably too low.

Decision-making structure/Committee purpose

Rick Kuehn reviewed the Decision Making Structure handout. He noted it's much easier to advance a project with consensus from the SWG. He noted that a Local Access Group (LAG) will also meet and advise the PDT about specific access issues. The SWG will advise the Project Development Team (PDT), the decision-makers in this process. The PDT will do it's best to abide by the recommendations of the LAG and SWG, but must also consider design standards which must be balanced with the groups' wishes. The PDT is charged with making the technical assessments and decisions and will pass the IAMP and EA to the appropriate agencies for approval.

Committee protocols and ground rules

Kristin Hull introduced Jeanne Lawson who talked about how it is important to decide on committee protocols now in order to facilitate rough spots later on. Jeanne then referred to the draft list of protocols in the binder. She noted that it can be changed or it can stay as it is.

Jeanne then asked the group to think about times when there was a breakdown in the decision making process. The group listed the following issues:

- advisory group came up with a recommendation which the decision making body ignored.
- cliquish behavior where certain ideas were automatically discarded. He noted a need for the ability to agree to disagree and move on.
- members not being able to listen to each other. The larger group fragmented into smaller groups which didn't get anywhere and were unwilling to compromise. The process dragged on too long.

One member expressed hope that there aren't any preconceived plans at this point. He said that everyone at the table is aware of an increasing problem and all would like everything approached openly and honestly without preconceived notions of the way things are going to be.

Jeanne also asked why various processes have worked in the past. A member noted that "clear guidance" could lead to good group process.

Jeanne then went over the protocols and ground rules sheet. She noted that it had been approved by the PDT today. The amended protocols are attached to this meeting summary.

Responsibilities:

The group determined that members should attend all SWG meetings with the understanding that unavoidable conflicts may arise. The SWG requested that the PDT provide materials ahead of time so that the SWG can meet their responsibility to review materials before meetings.

Kristin Hull noted that there is a commitment by the PDT to provide materials by the Friday before meetings. Mr. Kuehn added that as the group must keep on schedule, everyone has an incentive to be on time.

Committee Structure: Jeanne noted that although the first bullet does not mention them, there are two jurisdictional interests present: Hillsboro and Forest Grove.

A member asked why Cornelius wasn't involved in the process given their likely interest. Lili Gordon responded that ODOT had contacted Cornelius but had not heard back. Mr. Brabish noted that there is still the possibility of involving other groups, and said that ODOT will follow up with Cornelius. Jeanne noted that Lili Gordon was the point of contact for adding other stakeholders.

Jeanne then talked about the advantages and disadvantages of allowing alternates. While alternates allow flexibility for committee members, such flexibility may serve as an incentive to not come. Having a changing group makes achieving consensus harder. It also raises the issue of whether alternates should be able to vote when they haven't been tracking the process. Jeanne also noted the issue allowing proxies.

The group discussed the pros and cons of allowing alternates and how alternatives could participate in the process. Initially, some members were uncomfortable with alternates

participating in decision-making. Some members also did not want to name alternates ahead of time.

Steve Harry reminded the group that the idea of having a “vote” is misleading. He noted that as this is a consensus seeking process, the process is more important than any vote itself.

The group determined that SWG members should designate alternates ahead of time and would be allowed to designate multiple alternates. Alternates can participate in decision-making processes. Jeanne noted that alternates are not required.

Kristin Hull advised against allowing proxy votes by other committee members. providing written proxy-votes. A member asked about the problems with written proxy votes. Jeanne answered that such written votes prohibit a decision based upon discussion and leads to a decision before the conversation occurs.

The group was somewhat split about allowing proxy votes. Kristin Hull proposed disallowing proxy votes, but allowing members to provide written comments prior to the meeting which would then be shared before any vote was taken. All agreed that this was a good alternative.

Meeting Guidelines:

A member asked about the final bullet which addresses public comment. Jeanne talked briefly about the reasons for public comment. A member suggested changing the comment period to the beginning of the meeting so that those making comments can go home.

A member noted that there have been times when it is difficult to cut off public comment, and the committee might not want to do it, or have the facilitator do it. For that reason, it might be better to have comments at the end of the meeting. Regardless, comments should be made with the consent of the group. Jeanne stated that the facilitator, Kristin Hull, could make initial judgment and then consult with the group.

There was some further discussion of how to structure public comments, when to have it, and whether it is necessary. Tom Braibish noted that there will be public open houses which will give the public the opportunity to make comments. Jeanne advised the group to think about the issue and to decide at the next meeting.

Decision Making: Jeanne pointed out that there will be times when the group just can't come to consensus. She asked the group to consider what to do in those situations. The group discussed the amount of support required to constitute a group recommendation. The group did not agree but discussed both two-thirds and three-quarters of those present as the threshold for a SWG recommendation. The group agreed to revisit this item at the next meeting.

The group did determine that a quorum would be required for the group to consider a recommendation. Jeanne advised the group to remember that the PDT is the decision making body, and even if a firm decision is not reached, the perspectives shared through deliberation affect the PDT's decisions.

Communications outside meetings: As the group was running short on time, Jeanne read from the rest of the protocols. She suggested adding a final bullet: “The group will act in ways that will respect the group process.” The group accepted the communications protocols.

Future meetings

The group agreed to hold future meetings from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesdays. The group will hold meetings on Thursdays instead if they fall during the second week of the month.