

FVI Solution Team Meeting #1
March 4, 2004– 9 a.m. to noon
ODOT White City/Jackson County Roads Building

ODOT:

Greg Holtoff, Debbie Timms, Brian Sheadel, Susan Landis, Peter Schuytema, Irene Toews, Brad Livingston, Gary Leaming, Jerry Marmom, James Burford, Leslie Schwab, Ray Lapke, Andrew Johnson, Art Anderson, William Fletcher

Non-ODOT/Other:

Dale Petrsek (Jackson County Roads), Denis Murray (Phoenix Planning), John Morrison (RVCOG), Nancy Reynolds (URS), Sheila North (URS)

Action Items (Short-Term):

- TPAU to move forward with traffic analysis upon availability of new MPO model (including analysis of South Stage crossing issue as it fits the current Purpose & Need statement).
- Nancy, Greg to amend Purpose & Need statement as technical info becomes available (from Solution Team et al).
- Sheila to add John Vial as voting member to current Solution Team list.
- CAC to develop project's Goals & Objectives.
- An IMP/AMP Sub-team, consisting of the Andy, Susan/ROW, the City, the County, Designer (Brian/James?), Ron Hughes, & David Evans (consultant doing the IMP) will get together to discuss the AMP/NEPA issue
- Andy to check current work scope of the AMP, and coordinate with Jerry, Debbie, and Greg.
- Dale and Greg to gather existing bridge inspection data for PMT/Solution Team use.
- Debbie and Jerry to follow-up on internal ODOT budget questions, as necessary.
- Greg to obtain HazMat and Air Quality Baseline Reports from ODOT staff.
- Brian Shaedel URS/Greg with: 1) new design files (for updated map production), and 2) a comparison of existing & proposed road templates for shoulder widths, side slopes, I-5 overcrossing, & sidewalk information (including gap/break locations, width, & condition).
- ODOT to remove Jackson County jurisdiction from existing interchange; also to consider removing other roads from County jurisdiction as well (per County's request).
- Debbie Timms to follow up with Art on the possibility of an ODOT white paper, public statement, and/or internal ODOT-only talking points on air quality issues, etc. relating to public comments regarding Phase 1.
- Open House scheduled for Tuesday, March 30, from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Phoenix City Hall. PMT (Greg/Debbie/Nancy/Sheila), Brian Shaedel, Ray, Peter, Irene, Susan Landis, John/RVCOG, URS sub-consultants (?), Gary Leaming, and the City to attend.
- ODOT to locate Bridge Designer for this project ASAP.

Action Items (Long-Term):

- ODOT will be asking for CETAS concurrence on the project's: 1) Purpose & Need, 2) Milestones, 3) Range of Alternatives, and 4) Alternative Selection.
- Interchange Management Plan productions by consultants will be done after selection of the Preferred Alternative – schedule will depend on this.
- PDT is required to do an Interchange Management Plan & Access Management Plan on the project after selection of a Preferred Alternative (in coordination with Region 3).
- ODOT (James) to determine potential accesses; ROW (Susan) to subsequently speak with these property owners, following selection of a Preferred Alternative.
- CAC Meetings to be held on evenings of the 1st Wednesday of every month.
- Solution Team Meetings to be held on the 1st Thursday of every month (times & locations TBA by Debbie on a monthly basis).
- ODOT to consider the Rogue Valley regional problem-solving process for determination of future growth areas (as represented on the project area map).
- Some Technical Report fieldwork (wetlands, biology (T&E, plants) to occur in the spring of 2004 (others to start in November 2004).
- ODOT to request Preferred Alternative recommendations from: 1) the Phoenix City Council, and 2) the CAC.
- Greg to coordinate the possibility of a workshop between ODOT, the City, and the County on project debriefing prior to the City-mandated public hearing (for City's recommendation of a Preferred Alternative).

Meeting Notes:

Introductions given by all in attendance.

Air Quality

- Peter informed the group that Medford is currently going through an Air Quality Conformity process to meet the new PM2.5 standards; this could also have impacts on this project. *(Note from Vince Carrow on 3/16/04: PM10 conformity was established for the RTP in April 2002 and for the MTIP in August 2003. Because the project is in the PM10 non-attainment area, RTP/MTIP conformity is still applicable.)* Greg reminded that this is a PM10 issue only, & that CO does not apply. *(Note from Vince Carrow on 3/16/04: The proximity of the project to the Medford CO Maintenance Area should be recognized and project-level conformity criteria should be of concern.)* The air quality analysis will be model-based, and due to better current auto improvements, many of these non-attainment concerns may be going away in the future; CO would be the major hang-up, however. *(Note from Vince Carrow on 3/16/04: Most of the modeling concerns will go away when the area's status changes from non-attainment to maintenance. This results from a change in the tests used to conform RTP/MTIP's; non-attainment area tests are Build vs. No-Build emissions and Build vs. 1990; maintenance area test is Build vs. Budget.)* Note that PM 2.5 standards are currently not being recognized by the government. *(Note from Vince Carrow on 3/16/04: False!!! PM2.5 standard is recognized, DEQ is monitoring*

emissions of this pollutant in the Rogue Valley; a major source of this pollutant is the transportation sector; and Rogue Valley is currently in 'attainment' of this standard.)

Alternative Development

- ODOT is requesting Preferred Alternative recommendations from: 1) the Phoenix City Council, and 2) the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). This will occur after ODOT publishes the Draft EA. Debbie indicated that the City Council request is due to the heavy city funding for this project (approximately \$1 million).
- Debbie & Greg debriefed the Solution Team on the current Petro lawsuit/truck stop issue with the public, as well as other citizen-introduced and/or technical issues (“red flags”) associated with this project. One point for consideration was the repeated public recommendation at the CAC meeting that the potential for a South Stage Crossing will likely need to be considered in the design process (and disclosed for purposes of the EA). Greg mentioned that this should be tested in the TPAU traffic model as well.
- Potential solutions that were discussed included: Fixing Cheryl Lane, Bolz Road, changing the interchange angle, Traffic signal (North/South Phoenix Road), Extension of 4th/Oak to relieve pressure. Possible zone changes on east side, South Stage crossing. (Will there going to be graphics of the potential solutions for public’s consideration at open house on 3/30?)

APE

- There was a discussion on the validity of the current APE/Natural Resource sub-area boundary mapping (validity of red/blue line mapping was questioned by some ODOT technical staff). Greg responded to this by noting that these lines will change as the project develops; the APE only a general template for now because it is so early in the process.
- James B provided feedback on the new map (aka the need for different, updated road alignments). Brian Shaedel to send new design files to Brian Harris for production of a new map. James also noted that the current ramp lengths are likely sub-standard, so do we include this in the blue area as well? Does this then trigger a change to the red line boundary?
- Greg noted that the public will want to see an actual aerial, not just a planometric figure.
- Leslie also noted that the current blue line (APE boundary) is overkill for a Historic Analysis (this will change at the next stage of the project).
- Denis noted that ODOT must consider the current regional (Rogue Valley) problem-solving process to determine future growth areas (which may include about 500 acres to the SE of the existing map, & 1 block east of the Meadow View subdivision, all others to occur west of the project area).

Baseline Reports

- Greg noted that there are 5 or 6 resource-based, consultant-produced Draft Baseline Reports (to identify “red flag” issues) currently under ODOT review & that he is still waiting on 2 ODOT-produced reports (HazMat & Air Quality Baselines). Greg also

noted that noise will be a big issue based on citizen feedback regarding Phase I impacts (dust/noise/air/etc.) at CAC meeting #1.

Bear Creek Greenway

- Dale noted that: 1) the County says ODOT must also look at the Bear Creek Greenway for 4(f) & 6(f) issues. Greg noted that this is already being done, and 2) that the Jackson County Board of Commissioners does not want jurisdiction on this interchange road – ODOT may have to consider switching other county roads to city jurisdiction as well.

CETAS

- Greg gave a debriefing on the background & makeup of the Collaborative Environmental and Transportation Agreement on Streamlining (CETAS) Committee, which consists primarily of high-level agency staff from DSL, USACE, NOAA, USFWS, ODFW, SHPO, and DLCD.
- Greg announced that CETAS has chosen to track this project (at Feb. 17 meeting). ODOT will thus be asking for CETAS concurrence on the project's: 1) Purpose & Need, 2) Milestones, 3) Range of Alternatives, and 4) Alternative Selection. (Note that concurrence is not statutorily required, but strongly recommended for project success.) As project progresses, CETAS could reverse that decision.
- Nancy noted that CETAS will need to have all materials 30 days prior to their meetings and that CETAS has 30 days after these meetings to make a decision (thus up to 60 day lag for each concurrence point, potentially). An updated project schedule was presented with consideration of the CETAS timeline; this will be used/alterd throughout the life of the project, as necessary.

Environmental Justice

- Greg noted that there will also be potential Environmental Justice (EJ) impacts (at Bear Lake Estates, etc.). He is still uncertain as to the “strength” of the current EJ Executive Order, but this gets into the competing resources discussion (typical in the NEPA process).
- Art agreed; said this may be a strong public issue; if 2/3 of the project is going through low-income areas, with 1/3 going through high-income areas, where is the proportionality?
- Sheila mentioned a previous court case on EJ & the NEPA process where the suit failed by alleging failure of the NEPA process by an EJ violation (separate authorities). This may be relevant in this case as well.
- Andy believes that these issues (elderly, low-income populations) were also addressed in the west-side process.

- John Morrison (RVCOG) mentioned that the Bear Lake Estates is currently lower income but higher net wealth (mostly retired citizens). The manager of the Estates was present at CAC last night (not a member, however). The Coleman Creek Estates, however, represents low-income folks (including a large Hispanic population). Wendy, the manager of Coleman Creek Estates, is currently on the CAC. Also, the condo development along the Bear Creek Greenway consists of mid-to-low income populations.
- Debbie noted that there is currently only \$15 million of state funds for this project, enough to fund the west-side component only--no east-side improvements. ODOT is, however, seeking \$20 million of federal funds to add the east-side component.

Interchange Management Plan (IMP)/Access Management Plan (AMP)

- Nancy asked about the connection between the Access Management Plan (AMP) and the Interchange Management Plan (IMP).
- Debbie noted that Region 3 Planning is paying for IMP productions by consultants (this will be done after selection of the Preferred Alternative (PA) – schedule will depend on this). Also noted that Ron Hughes must sign off on both the IMP & AMP.
- Debbie also noted that the PDT is required to do an IMP & AMP on the project after selection of a PA (she would like them to do this in coordination with Region 3 Planning, if possible).
- Susan asked if access changes will affect the validity of the NEPA document. Greg responded that there should be some flexibility in the NEPA decision document to allow for this. Susan reminded the team of the need to document this process (for litigation purposes; ODOT ran into problems on this with South Medford).
- Greg noted that there may be NEPA overlap issues here (especially considering that the NEPA document usually caps out at 30% design level). James Burford (ODOT Design) stated that the process will include: 1) selection of a Preferred Alternative, 2) approved design work (at about 40%), & 3) the start of the ROW process.
- Greg said OAR 731 (state regulations) includes language regarding NEPA & local land use planning; these regulations define the term “*approved design*” differently than how NEPA defines this term (may be an issue because 2 different definitions/terminology are currently being used within ODOT).
- Susan noted that for South Medford, the AMP was done before the NEPA document.
- Peter said there may be traffic issues also, as he will have to use roadway spacing standards for Highway 99 in the project area (thus there are AMP needs for the traffic analysis). Greg noted that the NEPA process may flush out the larger issues, but not issues pertaining to individual driveways, etc. James responded that the AMP must flush out these issues, however, so we need to determine how to deal with this.
- It was decided that the AMP should fall out of the NEPA document. The question was raised: Who will address this issue? An AMP “**sub-team**” was created, consisting of Andy, Susan/ROW, the City, County, Designer, Ron Hughes, & David Evans (the consultant doing the IMP). Andy will also check to ensure that completing the IMP fits the current consultant work scope for the IMP (Andy to coordinate this with Jerry, Debbie, & Greg). Also, Debbie mentioned that there may be internal ODOT budget questions to be answered (e.g., who will fund the IMP, AMP, etc.). Jerry to follow up on this.

- Andy asked if the AMP triggers a full-blown public involvement strategy (property owners, etc.). Debbie said yes; James noted that it will be conceptual at first, with finalization/detail occurring only after the alternative development process. ODOT should ask for a recommendation of potential accesses, then talk with these property owners (Susan to take care of this). Solution Team will look at how it was done for South Medford project.

Meeting Schedule (Solution Team, CAC)

- CAC meetings will be held on the 1st Wednesday of each month. The Solution Team (ST) agreed that ST meetings will be held on the 1st Thursday of each month (day after CAC meetings). Any time & locations changes will be announced by Debbie, as needed.
- Debbie noted that if any Solution Team member cannot make an upcoming meeting to let her know (& find an alternate to attend, if possible).
- It was determined that the following would attend the 3/30 Open House: PMT, Brian Shaedel, RVCOG, URS, Sub-consultants, Gary Leaming, the City, and ROW (if possible). Also, Ray/Peter/Irene should be in attendance as well.

NEPA

- Greg Holtoff presented information on NEPA, focusing on the Environmental Assessment (EA) process. The project is currently on a (tight) 18-month schedule, with a 2007 Bid/Let Date. (Debbie confirmed, per ODOT staff inquiry, that this Bid/Let Date was indeed “set in stone” for project purposes.) Due to this tight timeline, ODOT must focus on the most efficient processes.
- Greg explained the role of the Solution Team Members/ODOT Resource Staff in this process. Each role varies somewhat, but overall focus is on either review of consultant reports or independent report production, depending on resource area. Solution Team will also develop project’s Evaluation Criteria.

Noise

- Denis noted that a private developer had previously built & paid for the sound wall(s) at the north & sound end of the interchange; however, there are still 10 houses in the middle of these walls which are not covered, & the City is currently in negotiation/discussion on this issue (would be a \$175,000 project).

Project Phasing

- Debbie gave a debriefing on Phase I of the Fern Valley Project, which was a Categorical Exclusion; she also discussed what is expected for this phase (Phase 2a, an EA).
- Greg noted that the EA may be phased. If this phasing occurs, however, future NEPA re-evaluation (Continuing Validity) may be required if the project timeline extends too far into the future. This is something to consider for Phasing Schedule, etc.

Project Schedule

- Nancy debriefed the Team on the current project schedule (handout in MS Project format provided). Bid/Let date scheduled for 2007; Draft EA anticipated next

summer (June 2005); Public Hearing scheduled for July 2005 (Debbie noted that this will be separate from the County/City Council hearings, although Nancy says these may be able to occur together/combined); Revised EA by December 2005.

- The schedule may be altered in the future depending on CETAS involvement, Public comment/feedback, etc.
- Greg noted that Technical Report work is anticipated to begin in November 2004, though certain technical areas (Noise, Wetlands, Plants & Vegetation, etc.) may need to occur earlier due to field seasons et al.

Public Involvement

- Greg announced the upcoming March 30 Open House for this project. There could be another contingency public meeting depending on how the process evolves.
- John Morrison (RVCOG) introduced himself & explained the role of Public Involvement in this process.
- John gave a debriefing on the previous night's CAC Meeting, and noted that there was some citizen dissatisfaction with the existing interchange. It was made clear to the CAC at this meeting that ODOT intends to bring citizens into the process as early as possible, & before decisions are made. There was some cynicism about this at the CAC meeting.
- Public Involvement tasks include Stakeholder Outreach (already started). John felt that the CAC was a quality group, with good citizen/stakeholder representation and much interest in the project overall.
- The CAC will hold monthly meetings on the 1st Wednesday evening of each month (the night before Solution Team meetings). John will provide debriefings of CAC feedback at each Solution Team Meeting (& vice-versa for Solution Team information to the CAC) – it will be a 2-way communication process.
- John reminded everyone that the Open House is scheduled for March 30, 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the Phoenix City Hall.
- RVCOG will facilitate outreach to special interest groups, including local organizations & citizen groups through regular presentations (with special focus on low-income and/or Hispanic populations, & bike/pedestrian advocates).
- Other Public Involvement efforts to include the Public Hearing(s), use of a project logo, public information, project newsletters, & media releases.
- Greg said the CAC meeting was productive, with good stakeholder representation, and that it was very helpful in helping to frame up the Purpose & Need and reasons for the project, and to clarify the CAC role in the project.
- Debbie noted that RVCOG is a sub-consultant to URS, so all formal communication to the press will be done solely by ODOT (through Gary Leaming, Project Information Specialist). If technical staff (ODOT or other) receive project-related questions from the press or a public figure, this request should be forwarded to Gary.
- The attendees at the meeting described their role in the project development process. There is no Bridge Designer currently in place for the project.
- Dale Petrsek informed the group that Jackson County feels this to be a "City" project, & not necessarily a County project.
- John M recommended an ODOT public statement or white paper on the sensitive issues raised by the public (air quality, etc.). Debbie noted that this should be a

discussion with Art, who had left the meeting. Debbie to follow-up on this. (Action Item.) Susan noted that ODOT must be sensitive, however, to current litigation on other –Fern Valley, Petro, & should deal with the Dept. of Justice if deciding to progress with such an effort. Greg stated that he would rather not see a public statement at all, given these issues. Gary & John suggested developing internal (ODOT-only) talking points on these issues (for press releases & guidance, etc.).

- Denis noted that the Mayor & City Council have both committed to work with landowners on these issues.
- Denis Murray (Phoenix Planning) indicated that a public hearing must occur before the City Council request can be made. Greg asked about the timeline for this; Dennis responded that the Council meets twice a month, and that they usually provide the public with a 20-day notice of these hearings. Denis suggested that ODOT schedule a workshop to inform the Council of project updates/design information before a public hearing is held. (Denis will coordinate this with Greg).
- Dale Petrasek (Jackson County Roads) noted that the Board of Commissioners may also want to be involved in the project, and suggested that ODOT consider streamlining this effort with the City Council workshop suggested above.

Purpose & Need

- Nancy has been working with Greg to develop the Purpose & Need (P&N) statement, which drives the entire process. A draft P&N was provided in the Solution Team binder; information still needed is identified in italics.) The P&N is a draft, organic document (always changing), and will be amended as technical information becomes available.
- Greg emphasized the need for quantifiable data at this point (to justify the project), e.g., traffic issues, congestion statistics, crash data. The Solution Team should provide background data for each of these data gaps, as available.
- The Solution Team is responsible for developing the P&N Statement, and it is mandatory that the alternatives meet the P&N.
- The CAC will develop the Goals and Objectives, but it is not mandatory that the alternatives meet all of the Goals and Objectives. ODOT will not be formally asking for input from the CAC on the P&N. *(Note from Greg Holtoff on 3/16/04: This is not quite true. The CAC is free to make suggestions on P&N, but because ODOT and FHWA “own” P&N, we will only accept comments of great relevance.)*
- Greg referenced the existing CEQ Guidance, FHWA Paper, & CETAS “template” for P&N development: keep Purpose short; focus on quantifiable issues; do not include solutions; ensure quantifiable Needs support the Purpose.
- Greg noted that ODOT will eventually use the Purpose & Need, and Goals & Objectives to help form the Alternative Evaluation Criteria for this project, which will be the framework for alternative selection).
- Nancy/Debbie asked the Solution Team if there is any other info currently available for P&N development, e.g., bridge data. Dale responded that Steve Tuttle may have bridge inspection data, map cracking, etc. through the ODOT Bridge Inspection Program. Greg asked about the year of this data; Leslie thought April 2003. Bridges are inspected every 2 years. ODOT/URS will pull data from this source. The Bridge Inspection Log is currently available on the ODOT intranet site.

- Brian Shaedel was asked to provide Nancy & Greg with a comparison of existing & proposed road templates for shoulder widths, side slopes, I-5 overcrossing, etc. Some Solution Team Members indicated that there are deficiencies with the existing bridge & sidewalks (broken up, gaps, etc.), as well as with the geometrics, traffic, crash history, etc. Sidewalk information should include the location of gaps/breaks, width & condition, etc.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Debbie Timms gave a debriefing on Solution Team Membership Roles & Responsibilities. Debbie asked for direct, open communication between ODOT & URS technical staff – only need to cc Greg & Debbie if issues arise in this process.
- It was noted that John Vial is a Voting Member; this needs to be updated on current Solution Team contact list (Sheila to do).
- Debbie passed around a signature form to confirm ODOT individual review & understanding of these Roles & Responsibilities.

South Stage

- Greg noted that the South Stage potential was tested in the previous South Medford traffic model, but was weeded out at its early stages (because it didn't work well). Although it is likely outside the scope of this project, it will still need to be tested because it fits the Purpose & Need.
- CAC feedback surrounding this issue included: SE Medford Plan (land use, traffic, socioeconomics). Are we looking at adding capacity to FVI for Medford-based growth? And, if so, why aren't we looking at South Stage to carry this growth?

Stormwater

- Denis asked about the new stormwater requirements, including NPDES. William responded that ODOT has its own NPDES permit, but city & county streets must coordinate independently of this. NOAA is also asking these questions for its cumulative impacts analysis. ODOT must consider the hydrology of receiving waters from its projects (even within the Urban Growth Boundary, etc.).

Zoning

- Debbie informed the group that TPAU is waiting on the new MPO zoning plan; additionally, the City's Interchange Business Zone has not yet been adopted. (Peter noted that he will assume future implementation when developing the draft traffic study. TPAU data will feed into the Transportation Technical Report.)
- Denis noted that the City is considering a Trip-Cap ordinance. The current timeframe includes having a working draft in 3 months, with adoption of the ordinance 4 months later (i.e. 7 months from now). It was noted that it will be difficult for the City to slow development because of a lack of a Trip-Cap ordinance, thus local landowners can push development through the master plan process. The result is that, until the ordinance is in place, it will be hard to prevent private development that may have traffic impacts in the interim; this will be an issue to be discussed between Peter & the City.

Meeting adjourned, 12:05 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, April 8, 2004. (Time/Location TBA)