



Meeting Date: Friday, Oct. 14, 2005

Purpose: Project Development Team Meeting

Distribution: Project Development Team Members, public

From: Vicki Guarino, Rogue Valley Council of Governments

Date Prepared: Oct. 18, 2005

PDT Attendees: Laurel Samson, Jon Jordan, Tanya Henderson, Jeff Hunter, Dorothy Upton, Jerry Marmon, Tracy Rico, Eryca McCartin, Angela Findley, Gary Leaming, Vicki Guarino, Ray Lapke, Jason Sheadel, Connie Kratovil, Rowdy Bates, Gary Leaming, John Vial, James Burford, Susan Landis, Scott Smithline, Nick Fortey.

PDT Absent: Steve Hodge

Other Attendees: Del Robertson, Shannon Repp

1. Call to Order/Review Agenda/Approve Minutes

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Vicki Guarino called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. and made introductions. She reviewed the agenda and asked for changes to the minutes of the previous PDT meeting. The PDT approved the minutes as presented.

Eryca McCartin talked about the decision and refinement process. She said the focus of this meeting will be to identify the better alternatives, which will be forwarded into the environmental assessment, refined further, and evaluated for environmental impacts.

2. CAC Update

Rowdy Bates, CAC

Bates said the CAC found pros and cons to each of the alternatives, especially in terms of impacts to the community, which was most important to the committee. None of the alternatives solved all problems. The CAC talked about keeping the best parts of the existing alternatives, combining and refining them to create an alternative that will work best for everybody. The CAC was most concerned about business and residential impacts. CAC discussion posters, detailing pros and cons of each of the five alternatives, were displayed on the walls for PDT review.

3. Open House Review

Gary Leaming, ODOT

Leaming described the August 25 open house, and reported on the comments received. He referred to a PowerPoint, and slides were distributed prior to the meeting. Report on the open house is in the project file.

4. East Section Discussion and Decisions

Project Management Team

Review Concepts. Aerial drawings of the five concepts were distributed to PDT members. Connie Kratovil explained the evolution of the five east-side alternatives now presented, and how they were developed from past recommendations and decisions of the CAC and PDT, combined with traffic analysis information. All of the features that the committees voted to drop in August have been dropped. All of the features that the committees wanted to keep have been refined based on traffic information and mixed and matched to create the alternatives now being put forward. Traffic movements, widths, speeds, access and other points were described and discussed on each concept individually. Concepts were discussed as follows:

East 1. Responding to a question, Kratovil explained why the Allen Creek intersection has to have so many lanes. There may have to be some changes to the intersection later, if a fourth bridge over Rogue River is built. There was concern that this concept would put significant constraints and costs on a fourth bridge. The need for the dual left turn lanes on Allen Creek was explained. It was noted that without the dual lefts, the intersection with the frontage road would have to move north, impacting more houses. The highway design speed would be 50 miles per hour, and the design speed on the frontage road would be about 25-30 miles per hour. The frontage road would be the only access to the businesses along the north side of Hwy 199. Kratovil described the lane widths and other design features that are common to all of the alternatives. There are some details, including speed and access, that still need to be worked out. The location of the intersection on Allen Creek is based on required storage lane lengths. The option of grade separating Allen Creek and Redwood Avenue, instead of the intersection, was discussed.

East 2. The driveway collectors were described. It was noted that they would be built to the city's alley standards of 24 feet wide. A fire truck would take the whole road and large trucks probably would not use it. A wider street would take out many of the businesses. Laurel Samson said the access as proposed would not meet city standards, so could not be a public road. To meet standards, the access would have to have sidewalks and would have a 40-foot right-of-way. What has been drawn is narrower than 40 feet. It was noted that the purpose of this concept was to minimize impacts, but if it can't be built under city standards then there would be no reason to carry this alternative forward. Samson said that if it is not built to city standards then it would not be a public street, raising the question of who would maintain it. ODOT would expect the city to take over any local streets built by this project. There was a discussion about bicycle access, but several PDT members agreed that these are low-volume, low-speed streets, so bikes don't need separate lanes. Nick Fortey said it would have to have sidewalks.

East 5. Geometrically, it would be more of a challenge with a fourth bridge, but it would work. Kratovil noted possible access problems around Allen Creek and Redwood Avenue. It was noted that mixing and matching features can still be done but they are not 100 percent interchangeable due to interrelated traffic movements between features.

East CAC 2. Kratovil said this alternative has access problems, especially in the area of Allen Creek and Redwood Avenue. Rowdy Bates said the access issues can be resolved with other frontage roads; others said such a road might not work. Some PDT members said it seemed to not be compatible with a fourth bridge. Also, it may pose problems for emergency access. Fortey asked that access information be available graphically for all of the options; Findley said that will be done as part of detailed analysis. Marmon indicated that graphic depictions can be developed to document the pros and cons of this option. Upton said that the specific configuration of driveway collectors have not been specifically determined at this point; general locations along Hwy 199 are fairly known due to weave/merge and lane change standards.

East PDT 2. After hearing the explanation of this concept there were no questions

Traffic Analysis. Dorothy Upton reviewed the information presented in her memo and discussion sheet, which were distributed at the meeting. She explained the interaction of weave merge distances, volume/capacity ratios and controls that improve safety. She said there is a trade-off between safety and congestion. It would be possible to have high v/c numbers and have a safe roadway because the traffic would be flowing more smoothly. Also, Upton said the traffic analysis shows that a design exception will be required to get the width that is necessary for intersections – a combined width of more than 100 feet. This is large, but manageable in an urban setting. She reviewed the conclusions of her analysis. Based on the traffic analysis, Upton recommended forwarding East 1, 2, 5 and CAC 2. In detail, the recommendations showed: East 1 is best for safety, but has high v/c ratios; East 2 is not as good for safety, but has better v/c ratios; East 5 is good for safety and the best v/c ratios, but has out of direction travel. East CAC 5 has good v/c ratios, but is not good for safety and has extensive out of direction travel. There was discussion about the meaning of Level of Service ratings – a city rating based on delay. The city’s minimum standard is D. Fortey asked about grade separating all US 199 intersections; he was told that alternative was not examined, but it was noted that it would have significant right-of-way impacts. Also in discussion it was noted that v/c ratios are not affected by speed.

(10 minute break)

Evaluation Matrix. Angela Findley reviewed the purpose and need statement and the evaluation matrix noting in particular the v/c ratios, bike access, business displacement, cost and phasing potential. McCartin reminded committee members that they might disagree with the ratings recommended and they can change them as they see fit. The matrix is a tool that can help them decide which alternatives are better.

Also, Findley reviewed all of the CAC pros and cons on each concept, and recommendations from the previous night’s CAC meeting. The CAC comments were posted around the room, alongside large-scale drawings of each alternative. The comments were reviewed and discussed.

PDT Discussion/Evaluation. PDT members were asked to add their comments. PDT commented as follows:

East 1. In discussion PDT members said the CAC comment “complex design” means that it is difficult for drivers to understand. PDT comments were divided into pro and con.

Pro:

- Separates local and through traffic.
- May be complex, but is necessary

- Fairgrounds access
- Good for safety, reduces conflict points
- Makes Hwy. 199 function as expressway
- A good frontage road will encourage business development and redevelopment

Con:

- Shifts to locals the cost of accommodating a fourth bridge
- Splits fairgrounds property
- Excessive road-building and asphalt
- Ringette fails in 20 years

John Vial cautioned the committee against trying to design something for the fair or similar large event and others agreed. Samson said she was concerned about breaking up the fairgrounds property, not event traffic.

East 2

Pro

- Frontage roads have promise and should remain under study
- Makes Hwy. 199 function as expressway

Con:

- Problems at Ringette
- Lose connectivity of frontage road as full alternative route
- Reduce expressway function with additional right-in/right-out access points
- Less safe than East 1
- More residential impacts (from cut-through traffic)
- Difficult to enter highway from driveway collectors
- Discourages business development/redevelopment in Ringette area
- Shifts to locals the cost of accommodating a fourth bridge
- Disrupts fairgrounds
- Excessive road-building and asphalt

Kratovil asked whether it is more important to serve existing businesses with an alley, or if roads should be built for potential future businesses with the understanding that those roads would probably require the taking of some existing businesses. Samson cautioned against assuming from the aerial drawings that an entire business would be lost; others agreed and noted specific business that might not be taken entirely. Some PDT members said motorists might not see an alley and could overlook businesses; if the access looks more like a road people will notice it. Vial said the city will be expected to take over these accesses.

East 5

Pro

- Simpler function/access
- Less complex for exit and entry points
- Less impact to fairgrounds
- More direct design; not a lot of out of direction travel
- Smaller footprint at Allen Creek

- Good comparison with other frontage road alternatives
- Will spread traffic to other routes, such as Dowell.

Con

- Ringette overpass cuts off business/ bulb out at grade (East 1) is better and probably would work traffic wise.
- Traffic operations eastbound to southbound Allen Creek
- Won't provide good access
- Visual impacts at Ringette (retaining wall 20 feet high, about 1,000 feet long)
- Cost and visual impacts of bridges
- Wouldn't work well with fourth bridge

Responding to a question, Rowdy Bates said CAC voted for it because it provides another alternative at Allen Creek

East CAC 2

Pro

- Smaller footprint

Con

- Confusing; does not meet driver expectations
- Extreme access problems
- Difficult to expand for fourth bridge
- On east side, development would cause Highway problems; Connector roads present operational problems when area develops
- Not safe in areas, such as northbound Allen Creek
- Out of direction travel

East PDT 2

Pro

- Good north-south connectivity; a new crossing provides alternatives to highway.

Con

- Hospital access may be a problem

In discussion, it was noted that this alternative meets the purpose and need, but fails on many goals. Fortey was concerned that the group not be constrained by funding issues, but should look more at purpose and need. Others said the goal is to be able to improve safety with the money that appears to be available realistically. It was discussed that not phasable means the bridge has to be built before the alternative will function. If part of the alternative were built, the improvement wouldn't help the problems. Funding and phasability are goals, but are not a large part of the decision. Forty said funding should not be a driving factor.

PDT Votes. The PDT's eight voting members were Laurel Samson, Jon Jordan, Tanya Henderson, Jeff Hunter, Dorothy Upton, Jason Sheadel, Jerry Marmon, and Tracy Rico. They voted as follows

Concept	Forward	Drop
East 1	8	0
East 2	0	8
East 5*	7	1

Concept	Forward	Drop
East CAC 2	0	8
East PDT 2	0	8

*Modified during meeting. The PDT agreed that if they voted to forward it, this concept will be modified to include a bulb-out at Ringette.

Samson said there are some potential pedestrian problems on East 5; and that if issues can't be worked out, it may be necessary to revisit dismissed alternatives.

Jerry Marmon asked for reasons for the vote on East CAC 2 vote in light of the CAC's recommendation to forward this concept for further refinement. PDT members noted problems in both the east and west sections. More specifically, they noted:

- Difficult right turns onto a busy highway;
- Difficult turning at Allen Creek (not safe and doesn't meet driver expectations);
- Would move safety problem from the highway to Redwood Avenue;
- Likely socio-economic impacts;
- Harms viability of the fourth bridge;
- Safety;
- Significant impacts to neighborhoods; and
- Driveway connectors are not good long-term answer, and will not serve long-term growth needs.

5. West Section Update/Next Steps

Eryca McCartin, ODOT

McCartin said the committees will meet next month refine the west section. Meanwhile, the project team has been addressing conditions governing installation of a signal at Hubbard Lane. It appears that when project opens, it will not qualify for a signal based on Hubbard cross traffic flows. However, it is expected that with anticipated growth in the area, Hubbard traffic soon will increase to a point where in near future a signal could be installed. At the current growth rate, a signal won't be far off, but it will not be immediate. The committees will look at refinements regarding the Hubbard intersection and other areas in the west section.

Angela Findley said there will probably be a break in meetings after November, while the project staff does environmental work. Meetings should resume in January or February.

6. Public Comment

Shannon Repp said the CAC favored East CAC 2 because of the lower costs, but they were concerned about the business impacts.

Del Robertson said the Union Avenue slip ramp is needed to move traffic off the highway.

7. PDT Comfort Check

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Guarino said this is a time to check in with each PDT member to see how they are feeling about the process – if they're comfortable with what has gone on, or if they have concerns.

Tracy Rico: Comfortable with the two remaining options.

Jeff Hunter: Good progress was made

Tanya Henderson: Good.

Jon Jordan: Likes the two selected options.

Jason Sheadel: Comfortable; I like the two options.

Laurel Samson: Disappointed about the signal at Hubbard, but OK. Hopes the PDT was not too hasty in eliminating East CAC 2 and maybe didn't look hard enough for solutions to make it work.

Jerry Marmon: OK and feels as though the project did look at ways to make East CAC 2 work.

Dorothy Upton: Glad the project is down to two alternatives in the east section.

Ray Lapke: OK.

Angela Findley: Appreciated everyone's hard work.

Scott Smithline: Appreciated everyone's efforts because there was a lot of information to work through.

Eryca McCartin: OK and thanked PDT members

Rowdy Bates: Not comfortable because the CAC strongly supported East CAC 2.

James Burford: Good discussion and looking forward to working out the design details.

Nick Fortey: OK. The record of the decision is important, and the mixing and match of parts of concepts was a good process.

John Vial: OK

Susan Landis: OK,

8. Wrap Up

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Guarino said the next meeting of the project development team will be 9-11:30 a.m., Nov. 4, in the Rogue Community College board room. The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.