



## MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting Date:** Thursday, June 8, 2006

**Purpose:** Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

**Distribution:** CAC Members, Project Development Team, public

**From:** Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

**Prepared by:** Pat Foley, RVCOG

**CAC Attendees:** Rowdy Bates, Irving Citron, Jay Eastwood, Alex Grossi, Janine Law, Deanie Manning, Suzanne Myers, Jim Rafferty, Bart Van Syoc and Ron Wright

**CAC Absent:** Randy Repp

**Project Team Attendees:** Jason Sheadel, ODOT Roadway  
Dorothy Upton, ODOT TPAU  
Gary Leaming, ODOT Public Information  
Debbie Timms, ODOT Project Leader  
John Vial, ODOT  
Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff Consultant Project Manager  
Connie Kratovil, Parsons Brinckerhoff  
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG  
Pat Foley, RVCOG

**Other Attendees:** Tracy Rico, Laurel Samson and Tanya Henderson, PDT and 10 members of the public

## **1. Call to Order/Review Agenda/Approve Minutes**

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki called the meeting to order. She reviewed the agenda and asked if there were any changes to the May 11, 2006 minutes. Jim Rafferty requested that his statement “Jim Rafferty said he is in agreement with taking this signal out as long as there is another ‘adequate’ fairground access being studied” be rescinded and changed to “He is opposed to taking the fairground signal out”. There were no other changes. The minutes were approved with the requested change. Vicki introduced members of the PDT who were in attendance: Laurel Samson, Grants Pass; Tanya Henderson, Oregon State Police; John Vial, ODOT; Tracy Rico, PDT Citizen at Large.

## **2. Update on May 12 Project Development Team Meeting**

Rowdy Bates, CAC Chair

At the last CAC meeting there was discussion on receiving information regarding the city’s transportation plan. We felt it would be beneficial if somebody from the city would attend our meeting to answer questions and provide information. Laurel Samson is in attendance tonight. The PDT agreed to have her give the CAC an update.

## **3. Examine information requested at May meeting**

### **A. Review of Grants Pass Master Transportation Plan**

Laurel Samson, Grants Pass Assistant City Manager

Laurel started her presentation by explaining that the city’s transportation plan was developed in 1997 and adopted by the Grants Pass City Council and the Josephine County Board of Commissioners in 1998. During the 18 month development stage there were public workshops and a public hearing.

The transportation plan breaks the streets into five different categories; 1) state highways, 2) arterials, 3) collectors, 4) local collectors and 5) local streets. Most of the plan addresses the first four. Laurel went on to explain the features of each street classification.

- Arterials are the largest streets and are designed to carry traffic between major areas. The focus on arterials is mobility. Travel lanes can be from 2 to 4 lanes. Speed limits vary on arterials. Usually there are no driveways except for some commercial. Because many of the streets were developed before the Plan was adopted, we do have some residential driveway accesses. If those streets were built today, that would not be allowed.
- Collectors connect neighborhoods to neighborhoods. The focus is still on mobility, moving people between neighborhoods and within an area. Collectors have 2 lanes, lower speeds and are designed for fewer trips. There are limitations on driveways.
- Local collectors provide access and circulation within a neighborhood. There are 2 lanes and even lower speeds. It would be rare to have limitations on driveways.

- Local streets are designed for short trips allowing people to access a particular property. There are 2 lanes 25 mph is the standard speed. There are no restrictions on driveways.

Laurel said that she has heard that there is a concern that some of ODOT's proposals were out of sync with the city's transportation plan. She said that ODOT has done a good job matching the transportation plan. She went on to say that this does not mean that if this group, the design team, ODOT, city and county decide that they want to do something different than what is shown in the transportation that it cannot be done. The plan can be amended. Some of the proposals on the table now, i.e. Union Slip Ramp, West Park Street and an overpass, would require changes in the transportation plan because they are not now recognized.

Using a PowerPoint map, Laurel showed the group the location of the different types of roads. The adopted transportation plan shows the location of the fourth bridge in the Allen Creek and Lincoln Road area. This location will be looked at closer as a part of the South Y study. Laurel then focused on the adopted city plans for West Park Street. She said it is designated as both a collector (area near 6<sup>th</sup> Street) and a local collector (connection to Redwood area).

Alex Grossi asked, because the fourth bridge is so far out into the future and the need is here now, what about making West Park Street a collector now and then downgrading it after the fourth bridge is put in. Laurel said that once that investment is made, the neighborhood would change and it would not make sense to downgrade it.

Ron Wright asked Laurel if it was still realistic to put the fourth bridge at Lincoln and Allen Creek. Laurel replied that the city is starting to look at an expansion of the UGB. The city council wants to look at the future location of the bridge. But, if you put the fourth bridge too far to the west (Schroeder Park) people will not use the bridge because they would have to travel too far out of direction. Ron Wright added that he feels that it is short sighted to put the bridge at Lincoln because the population is moving to the west. Laurel said that the city is hiring traffic engineers to address this issue.

Jay Eastwood asked if West Park is shown on the map as a collector up to the Public Works area. Laurel said yes. Jay said that whether the connection is made through this project or by developers, wouldn't it be better to keep it as collector out to Allen Creek, because if it is a local street and people know of the connection, people will be going 35 mph on a street designed for 25 mph which will cause impacts to the people living in the area. Laurel said that the design will include features that will slow traffic.

Angela reminded the CAC that when this option was studied in the past, the PDT set a threshold of pulling an additional 20% of traffic off of the highway. If it did they would consider this option. The modeling showed that it pulled some traffic off but it did not meet the threshold. Jay added that he is not saying that for this project it is the right thing. He said that from a practicability standpoint maybe bike lanes and other features might be a good alternative. It would be a good thing to have a bike lane on Park Street verses the highway.

Laurel was asked if the city had gathered statistics showing traffic counts on West Park/Ringuette since new work on Highway 199 has been completed. She was also asked about traffic counts on Allen Creek/West Harbeck. Laurel said the city has recent traffic counts in both areas, but does not know if traffic counts were done before improvements were made. She will check to see what information is available.

Jim Rafferty asked Laurel if the city's plan shows Willow as a through street with a traffic light. Laurel answered yes. Laurel said that the city does not decide whether there is a light at Willow. ODOT has to do that. The city would like to see a light there. Jim asked about a light at Hubbard Lane. Laurel said that is not in the plan.

## **B. Highway 199 Safety Issues**

John Vial, ODOT

Tanya Henderson, OSP

John Vial said that there are three questions that the CAC asked for updated information on regarding safety on Highway 199. 1) There have been steps taken to improve the safety with enforcement and lower speeds. Has the problem been solved? 2) Safety of U-turns How safe are U-turns? and 3) Raised medians verses the continuous left turn lane, how do they work?

### Increased Enforcement

Tanya Henderson started by addressing the issue of whether the safety problems on Highway 199 have been solved. She reviewed highway statistics.

2004 statistics

- 50% of county fatalities were on Redwood Highway with ¼ of those being within the project area. Within the last five years a total of twelve fatalities have occurred.
- Types of uses of the highway. This has not changed by anything that we have done. We have done education, engineering and enforcement. All the same businesses, trucking industry, commuters, are still using the highway.
- In 2004 ODOT said Highway 199 is one of the worst state highways in the state. That is when they dedicated funding to the OSP, city police and Josephine County Sheriff's office. Traffic studies were done. The speeds were lowered. A raised median was installed at Willow Lane. Enforcement was increased. OSP has assigned one trooper every shift except on Tuesdays. One worry, even with increased presence, we are still writing a lot of tickets. A lot of the tickets are to locals.
- 2006 Memorial Day Statistics:
  - 6 troopers worked 32.5 hrs.overtime
  - 68 traffic stops
  - 43 citations
  - 67 warnings

- Crashes from Dowell Road to Midway
  - 2004 13 crashes
  - 2005 14 crashes
 \*recorded crashes may include more than one vehicle

John Vial said that fatalities tend to be random and it is hard to know what the trend is. 2002 was the worst year for accidents in the corridor yet there were no fatalities. We had almost half the number of accidents in 2004 yet it was the worst year we have had for fatal crashes.

Deanie said the statistics show that the problem isn't getting better. Drivers make errors and no matter what the speed limit is accidents are still going to occur. John Vial replied that you are always going to have a certain amount of driver errors. When this group met the first time, Redwood Highway had some of the highest crashes per million vehicle miles traveled. That is not getting better. We are well above what is normal for this type of facility.

Tanya showed an overhead which showed a comparison of speeds before and after the speed limit was lowered.

<b>Location</b>	<b>2004 w/55 mph speed limit</b>	<b>mph over</b>	<b>2006 w/50 mph</b>	<b>mph over speed limit</b>
Hubbard	61 mph	+6 mph	57 mph	+7 mph
RCC	62 mph	+ 7 mph	58 mph	+8 mph
Midway	63 mph	+ 8 mph	60 mph	+ 10 mph

John Vial said that a 4 mph reduction in speed is significant. But to keep this in perspective you must realize that at 61 mph the vehicle is traveling 89' per second. When you drop it down 4 mph you are traveling at 84' per second. But in terms of reaction time, if you are judging the speed of a vehicle coming towards you when you are turning on to or off of a highway, 5' per second is a very small change. It doesn't make much difference in terms of safety.

Bart asked if the technology that has been implemented in Myrtle Creek (sign showing vehicle speed) has decreased the amount of accidents. Jason said that the accidents have not decreased. The speeds went down about the same as here.

Jim Rafferty asked Tanya if a barrier on roadway is a deterrent to her job during an emergency. Tanya said that they deal with this everyday on I-5. Nothing is going to change that drastic for emergency response. She is in favor of a barrier. She is looking for ways to avoid head on crashes. The barrier helps her response time because she does not have to worry about cross traffic. John Vial agreed that a barrier does cause out of direction travel for emergency responders. The tradeoff is the left turns and the head on collisions. Almost all of the fatalities we saw in 2004 were associated with people crossing the road, turning left on the road or crossing the center line.

## U-turns

John said that nationwide U-turns on urban and rural arterials are common except in Oregon. Numerous studies have been done nationwide regarding the safety of U-turns at unsignalized intersections. In every case, the conclusions of these studies show that U-turns at high speed unsignalized intersections are safe. The most comprehensive study was done by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program. This study looked at 7,700 different intersections with U-turns. U-turns accounted for 1.1% of all the crashes at these intersections. It was the safest movement that you could make in the intersections. The conclusion of the study was that there is no indication that U-turns at unsignalized median crossings constitute a major safety concern.

## Raised Medians

John Vial said that the fatal crashes that happened on Highway 199 were associated with people crossing the road, crossing over the center line and left hand turns. Raised medians address this issue. It is all about conflict points when you are talking about medians. When you reduce conflict points you always reduce crashes. Raised medians do make a road safer. You could add an open median with a continuous left turn lanes and you would still have all of the conflict points. If you have a road that has low speeds and volume continuous left turn lanes will reduce accidents. On high volume/speed highways the crash rates are higher. The breakout point is around 20,000 trips per day.

Suzanne asked John to compare the pros and cons of raised medians with the Jersey Barrier. John said the Jersey Barrier is intended to redirect a vehicle and keep it going in the same direction of travel. A lower median, when you hit that at high speeds doesn't slow you down much. You can hop it and go over it which does not avoid the risk of a head-on collision. Jason said Oregon is the first state in the nation to test the tall barrier with a semi. The barrier did not allow the truck to go over it.

### **C. Review of Flyover connecting Highway 199 to Redwood Avenue**

Connie Kratovil, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Jason Sheadel, ODOT

Connie referred the committee to handout map labeled Modified ALT A with Flyover. She went on to explain how the flyover from Allen Creek Road/Redwood Avenue would connect to east-bound Highway 199. When developing this concept, it was found that the proximity of the flyover to Highway 199 and Allen Creek would create access problems. The advantage to a flyover is 1) you are not going to have as many turning movements and 2) and the volume to capacity ratio would improve at the Allen Creek/Highway 199 intersection. The one major disadvantage is the short distance between the touchdown-point and Ringuette which would cause weaving and merging issues and restrict turning movements at Ringuette. For property owners the accessibility to land north of Highway 199 on either side of Allen Creek Road will be a concern.

After discussion on the pros and cons of this option the CAC decided that no further study should be done.

#### **D. Union Avenue Slip Ramp Considerations**

Angela Findley pointed out that the configuration for the slip ramp is different than what the CAC has seen in the past. The difference is in the spacing that is needed at the two intersections at Ringuette/Highway 199 and Ringuette/Union Avenue. The intersection at Ringuette/Union Avenue would bulb out and will cause business displacements.

The intersection at Ringuette and Union Avenue was discussed. Rowdy Bates feels that this intersection will have to be upgraded (signalized) in the future no matter what alternative is selected.

Alex feels that this is a good alternative with the positive aspects being that the traffic flows and a bulb-out would not be needed if you synchronize the lights at Union and Highway 199/Ringuette. This is a good fix for the south side eastbound traffic. A good fix for the westbound north side is the West Park alternative. Alex does not feel that the traffic will be any greater on Union Avenue than it is now. He feels that the slip ramp will take traffic off of Highway 199 and will relieve the traffic that is headed into town. Bart added that it will lessen the traffic flow to Ringuette and lessen the need for right turns.

Alex referred to Alternative A which includes the frontage road on the east side. He would like the CAC to take a vote to remove it. Angela asked that this issue be tabled for the moment so that they can finish the follow up on information requested by the CAC.

Bart Van Syoc said the CAC requested information on extending Union Avenue as a two way road connecting to the signal at Albertsons which would accomplish the same thing as a slip ramp. Angela said that the PDT asked that the design team to focus on the ramp instead of changing some of the ancillary lanes.

Angela said the CAC made a recommendation to continue studying this option and the PDT voted not to continue studying this primarily because of shifting highway issues onto the local street networks.

Bart said that it is not the intent to move traffic off of the highway but to get destination traffic off of the highway as easily as possible instead of having it converge all in one spot.

Suzanne Myers does not like this option because it is going to interrupt the pedestrian and bicycle flow.

Jay Eastwood feels that this option will take all of the money and it would only fix 10% of the problem. The cost benefit is too great for what you will get out of it.

Deanie Manning thinks that it is important for the CAC to realize that we are just here to advise. Our votes don't matter when push comes to shove. We are part of the process. Part of the federal requirement requires that people from the community give input. Jerry Marmon said that the federal requirements say that we need to do public involvement. Most agencies do public involvement by holding an open house. Rarely do agencies do what this project is doing. He said that a CAC is not a requirement.

The CAC voted to recommend further study on the Union Slip Ramp Configuration with required engineering.

Vote                    5 Yes, 3 No, 2 Abstained

### **E. West Park Connector**

Angela said that during Laurel's presentation a fair amount the information regarding West Park Street's classification as a local connector was covered. At the request of the PDT last August we studied raising West Park to a higher road classification to encourage more use of that road to see if it had a benefit to the flow of traffic on the expressway. The PDT had set a threshold of pulling and additional 20% off the highway in order to study it further. The model showed 13% to 15% of the traffic was pulled off of the highway which did not meet the PDT's threshold. The PDT's decision was to no longer consider this concept.

Deanie asked if the city would consider this concept if 20% was pulled off of the highway. Dorothy said Laurel implied that if we got 20% or above then maybe they would look at going back to the public and start redoing the public involvement process to amend the city's transportation plan.

Jay asked what alternative was used for the modeling of West Park. Dorothy said it was done with having the third through lane on Hwy 199 and no frontage road. West Park was considered a backage road.

Alex Grossi does not see how one additional lane on the highway is going to solve the problem.

Bart said that the intention of the signal at Ringuette is to provide access to the hospital. There are other accesses to the hospital. Based on the half mile spacing criteria, Ringuette is too close to Williams Highway. This will create problems when they start to study the South Y. He feels it makes better sense to have the signal at the fairgrounds. John Vial worked on the Ringuette project. He said the main reason Ringuette was given strong consideration is because the intersection at Union/Fairgrounds Road is so short that there was no way to build it to where it could handle traffic. The idea was to get a different crossing to the highway because the fairgrounds intersection will not work. We were concerned with the spacing so we conditioned the approval of the Ringuette crossing on removal of the fairgrounds signal.

Jim Rafferty said the fairgrounds light should stay with a flashing yellow or red signal and then turn it on for special events. Dorothy said the problem is that once you do that there is a whole process for turning them off and on. You can do that in small towns on low level streets but this road is a above that level.

Bart said there needs to be another way into the fairgrounds. Angela said there is a meeting planned with the Fairground Board and the commissioners to talk about what alternative accesses make sense when the fairgrounds signal is removed.

Jim Rafferty said he likes the West Park connection because it brings the traffic from 6<sup>th</sup> Street into Redwood Avenue without using the highway.

A vote was taken on recommending that the West Park connection be considered for further study.

Vote: 5 Yes, 3 No, 2 Abstained

#### **4. Revisions to Alternatives A and B**

Connie Kratovil, Parsons Brinckerhoff  
Jason Sheadel, ODOT

Connie began by reviewing the history of the alternatives and modifications that have been made. Two alternatives passed the criteria screening last fall, East 1 and East 5B. These two alternatives were recommended to be brought into the environmental document. When merged with West 6, East 1 is now part of Alternative A and East 5B is part of Alternative B. Last month the CAC asked for identification of land ownership: private, county, school district, and city. The group reviewed the handout with this information.

Alternative A: Connie described the modifications to this alternative.

Alternative B: Connie explained that main difference in this alternative are minor roads for access issues.

#### **5. Alternative C Discussion**

Connie Kratovil, Parsons Brinckerhoff  
Jason Sheadel, ODOT

This alternative does not show a frontage road between Allen Creek and Ringuette. What is shown is an access road into the fairgrounds area. Connie explained the terminus locations of access roads.

Rowdy said there are several business between the fairgrounds and Ringuette that are near Highway 199. He asked if these businesses continue to have access to 199. Connie said yes, but that they will not have unlimited access. Access would be controlled by collector driveways.

Ron Wright said he likes this plan. He questioned how his business and three others would have access.

Jim Rafferty questioned the small bulb out instead of using the existing Redwood Avenue. Jason said that the alternative will pull the left and right turn traffic through the area. The bulb out is to provide space to allow the mixed connection.

A vote was taken on recommending that Alternative C be considered for further study.

Vote: 8 Yes, 0 No, 2 Abstained

## 6. Next Steps

Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Angela mentioned one handout “City and County Planned Projects” that was not discussed previously in the meeting since Laurel’s presentation covered some of it. If the PDT forwards Alternative C at its June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, then the agenda in July will include comparing side-by-side various design aspects of the remaining alternatives: 1) Alternative A, 2) Alternative B, and 3) Alternative C. Part of the information that will be available at the next meeting will be the detailed access management strategy for each alternative.

Jerry Marmon said that next month there will be a discussion on how often the CAC would like to meet during the technical studies. The study will take a few months to prepare.

## 7. Public Comment

Vicki Guarino, RVCOC

Vicki asked if members of the public had comments.

Elaine Booth: She noted that a vote had been tabled (Alternative A) earlier in the meeting. Angela responded by saying that is what the committee will be doing next month when they have the detailed comparison to evaluate each alternative.

Art Peary: He had a question regarding Alternative B. He questions whether there has been consideration given a south frontage road from Allen Creek to Union Avenue. People that he has talked to have brought that question to him. He feels that this would alleviate a problem in front of the fairgrounds. He also wanted to know if any consideration has been given to installing photo radar at Midway. John Vial said that this would require legislation. John said that we are not allowed to do this, but if Art is interested in pursuing this he should contact the local legislator.

Gerri Anderson: She asked if the West Park Connector is going to be considered. Vicki responded by saying that the CAC has recommended that the PDT take another look at this alternative. Gerri went on to say that this alternative will take 7 residents, one of which is vacant, and the frontage takes many businesses. She feels that the lesser evil would be the West Park Connector.

Dick Sackett: He said he is not against the barrier from Ringuette to Midway. He is against the barrier at Willow Lane. He went to a city council meeting last night where a subdivision with 100 homes is being considered. This subdivision is on Redwood Highway between Willow Lane and Hubbard Lane. Their access will be in two places, Willow Lane and Elmer Nelson Lane/Hubbard. Elmer Nelson has a one lane bridge. If there was a signal at Willow people could easily access the highway. Dick is in favor of having a signal at Willow Lane.

Jackie McBee: She would like to know if ODOT is considering the letter that was sent by David Frasher, Grants Pass City Manager. This letter addressed changing the freeway to a boulevard. Debbie Timms responded that Art Anderson is addressing the letter. Part of the problem is that the highway is designated as an expressway to allow travelers, including freight, to get from I-5 to the coast.

## 8. CAC Comfort Check

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki said this is the time for each CAC member to let the project team know how they are feeling with the way things are going.

Ron Wright: He is good.

Rowdy Bates: He is very happy to see an option that doesn't involve a frontage road.

Irv Citron: He is still uncomfortable with the fact that all of a sudden the west portion of this project has disappeared. There has been no mention of it. He agrees with what others have said about the barrier, but feels that we do not need the barrier until we take care what is going to happen when it is installed. One encouraging thing he heard tonight was that there would be a left turn lane to make U-turns from.

Bart Van Syoc: He is good. Bart likes Option C. It shows promise.

Alex Grossi: He is a bit disgruntled.

Janine Law: She is frustrated. Janine feels like this is going to end up the way it is going to end up regardless of what she thinks.

Jay Eastwood: He is good.

Suzanne Myers: She feels good.

Jim Rafferty: He said there are things that he is in favor of and some things that he is really opposing. The group is starting to split up along these lines, which is probably good because we can give the PDT a better view of what is going on.

Deanie Manning: She appreciates the opportunity to be able to give input. She recognizes the value of that. Hopefully we will all be able to pull together to make the highway safer.

## 8. Wrap Up/Adjourn

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Rowdy will not be able to represent the CAC at tomorrow's PDT meeting. Irv Citron will be able to attend that meeting.

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2006 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.