



Highway 62 Corridor Project

Date: August 30, 2004

From: Kathy Helmer, RVCOG

**Re: PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TEAM (PDT) MEETING
MINUTES for August 26th, 2004**

PDT Members in Attendance: Debbie Timms, Terry Kearns, Jamie Snook, Greg Holthoff, Gary Leaming, John Morrison, Kathy Helmer, Donna Beck, David Elliott, Jim Key for Skip Knight, Nick Fortey, Mike Quiltey, Rick Levine, Mark Gibson, Mike Arneson, Brian Dunn, Jerry Marmon.

Members Absent: Dale Petrasek.

Location: Jackson County Public Works Auditorium, Mosquito Lane, White City.

Guests: Four members of the public.

Resource Technical Team in Attendance: Art Anderson, John Vial, Susan Landis, Shirley Roberts, Kent Belleque, Marina Orlando, Dan Raker, Alex Georgevitch, Ray Lapke, Dave Warrick, Dave Goodwin.

1.0 Introductions

Project Leader Debbie Timms convened this first meeting of the Highway 62 Corridor Project PDT at 9:05 AM. She welcomed the PDT members and asked members to introduce themselves and explain their project roles. Terry Kearns said his role was to supply all technical information needed by the PDT. Debbie Timms' role is to manage the PDT. She promised to provide contact information on all members at the next meeting. Jerry Marmon's role is to ensure that all NEPA requirements are carried out. Mike Arneson identified his role as highway design. Brian Dunn focuses on traffic analyses. Gary Leaming specializes in providing project information. Jim Key was participating on behalf of Skip Knight to represent the City of Medford. Greg Holthoff

aims to provide continuity between the last National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and the current one. David Elliott is serving as a Citizen-at-Large on the PDT; he is concerned about getting traffic to and through the corridor. Nick Fortey is to ensure full compliance with NEPA requirements. Rick Levine represents the Medford/Jackson Chamber of Commerce. Mike Quiltey is the Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) representative. Mark Gibson represents the Oregon Trucking Association. Donna Beck is a resident of White City, serving as a Citizen-at-Large on the PDT. Kathy Helmer and John Morrison of the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) are to provide public involvement services.

Debbie recognized and welcomed members of the Resource Technical Team in attendance, as well as members of the public.

2.0 Project Overview

Terry reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives. The objectives were: 1) to become acquainted with Project Development Team members; 2) to develop an understanding of the Highway 62 Corridor Project; 3) to understand the roles and responsibilities of project bodies; and 4) to understand the ultimate project outcome.

Referring to the materials in his power point presentation, Terry Kearns provided an overview of the history of planning activities related to the Highway 62 Corridor that have occurred since the mid-1990s. He noted that the project was starting with identifying the problems on the corridor; this would proceed over the next few months.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Debbie Timms led the presentation on the roles and responsibilities of the Project Development Team, referring to the power point presentation slides. Debbie described the team, its roles and responsibilities, emphasizing that this was the decision-making body for the project. PDT members will receive a list of transportation acronyms at the next meeting.

Nick Fortey suggested that Debbie speak to the Purpose and Need component, since it was foundational to the NEPA process. Debbie said that a problem statement is first developed. The Purpose and Need is the problem statement. Any alternatives that move forward for consideration must support the Purpose and Need Statement. Greg Holthoff noted that the NEPA process was to be discussed in detail at the next meeting. Terry Kearns said that technicians were currently studying traffic problems. He noted that the Purpose and Need Statement has legal bearing. The project is required to look at all reasonable and feasible alternatives that respond to the Purpose and Need and all alternatives are measured against the Purpose and Need.

John Morrison began his presentation on the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) by noting that the first CAC meeting had been held the night before. It had been a very

productive orientation meeting. CAC members represent the variety of stakeholders and perspectives present along the corridor. Neutrality is not expected of CAC members. They serve as a sounding board, assist in identifying community issues and make recommendations to the PDT.

To recruit the CAC, the Project Management Team first identified a set of categories to be represented on the Committee. Then, 750 letters soliciting CAC candidates were sent to property owners, business owners, others along the corridor, and persons interested in transportation planning. Fifty (50) persons responded; 35 people wished to be considered for the CAC. All categories/perspectives were filled and the Project Management Team was pleased with the results. John shared information on the concerns respondents had about the corridor, referring to the power point slide on that topic.

John briefly described the roles and responsibilities of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) as an advisory body to the PDT.

4.0 Meeting Schedule

Terry Kearns explained the chart in the presentation entitled “Highway 62 Corridor Project Schedule”, explaining the overall phases in the project and legal benchmarks. The major milestones include: public and agency scoping meetings in the fall; development of the Purpose and Need Statement, a document that will evolve over time; the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to be ready in early 2006 and followed by a public comment period; and finally, the Final Environmental Impact Statement in early 2007.

Terry Kearns reviewed the content for meetings over the next six months, presented in the slide entitled “Next Steps”. He noted that the NEPA and Highway Design topics, originally scheduled for the September and October meetings, might well be discussed at the September meeting.

Debbie then asked the group if they would be able to meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month. This change was being proposed in an effort to accommodate CAC members, as well as the consultants’ travel schedule. After some discussion, it was decided that the CAC would meet on the third Monday of each month and the PDT would meet on the third Tuesday at 10:00 AM.

Greg Holthoff noted that CAC members had expressed their interest in more information on the project decision-making process; it would be good to have a flow chart on that at the next meeting.

Debbie Timms reiterated that members would receive all contact information at the next meeting.

5.0 Public Comment

Debbie Timms invited members of the public to comment. Earl Wood, City Councilor from the City of Eagle Point, rose to provide his idea for an alternative route. He noted that improvements to Highway 62 would impact communities to the north. There is a lot of housing construction going on in Eagle Point. Mornings in Eagle Point, "it's like a freeway"; a lot of traffic come from north of Eagle Point. His suggestion was to further improve Table Rock Rd. and to do this in combination with the extension of the old Haul Rd. to Agate where it connects with Leigh Way across from Highway 140. He suggested that Highway 62 be extended via Agate Road up to the Dodge Bridge area where it would reconnect with Highway 62 via Highway 234. That is in the area of the Butte Falls Highway.

He mentioned the idea of connecting Highway 140 with Interstate 5 via a route that went east from Highway 140, south of Gibbon Way, to Blackwell.

Debbie Timms noted that the project would look at all alternatives that responded to the Purpose and Need Statement. The project would be restricted by the definition of the problem. Terry Kearns noted that the planning horizon for the project was 20 years.

Mike Quiltey suggested that the project look at the Regional Problem Solving plan for the region's future land use scenario. Brian Dunn said that it might be helpful for RVCOG to talk about that at a future meeting. Some of the cities have their plans in place. Brian also said that the project might be limited to existing Comprehensive Plans.

Debbie Timms noted that construction on the project might begin in 2007. Jim Key asked if the project would be planned as a whole or in phases? Greg Holthoff said that the NEPA process covers the whole corridor, but that construction would be in phases. Jim Key said he was concerned about the time element in construction; it might be good to try to get all the funds at one time. If not, earlier phases might fail before later phases were completed.

David Elliott asked if the PDT would be wiping the slate clean or would it be reviewing previous alternatives? Debbie Timms responded that there had been some discussion of this question and it might be that the PDT would decide that issue. Brian Dunn noted that staff was gathering information to determine if the previous alternatives were still valid or if significant changes had occurred since those alternatives had been identified. Terry Kearns said that the framework would be detailed in the next meeting.

Nick Fortey suggested that all technical documents should be maximally available and that a web site would be a real benefit. Gary Leaming agreed with Nick; project information will be available on the Internet.

6.0 Adjournment

Debbie Timms adjourned the meeting at 10:00 AM, thanking everyone for their participation.