

Meeting Minutes

Project: US 26: Outer Powell Transportation Safety Project (OPTSP)

Subject: Community Advisory Group Meeting #3

Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2015

Location: Human Solutions Community Room, 12350 SE Powell Blvd.

Food was served at 5:30 p.m.; meeting started at 6:00 p.m.

1. The meeting began with a warm welcome, and Community Advisory Group and Project Team introductions.

Community Advisory Group attendees:

Cora Potter
Jean Ky
Joe Little
Kem Marks
Paul Grosjean
Cammy Pierson
Kim Christiansen (designee for Human Solutions sitting in for Jean DeMaster)
Dan McCue
Tom Lewis
Paul Grosjean, CAG Co-Chair

Project Team attendees:

Mike Mason, ODOT
Alan Snook, ODOT
Andy Johnson, HDR
Alex Cousins, HDR
Cassie Davis, HDR
Joan Brown Kline, Brown-Kline & Co.

Public/Other:

Jeff Owen, TriMet & Agency Working Group member

2. Community Outreach. Alex Cousins, public involvement lead, reviewed the recent outreach activities for the project.
 - On February 7th the project team held a Community Site Walk. The event was publicized via a media release, flyers, corridor canvassing and social media. Three separate stations (information tents) were set up along Powell Blvd. for the public. The site locations were at SE 111th, SE 122nd, and SE 145th. The location that drew the most attention was at SE 122nd where ODOT Region 1 Manager Rian Windsheimer and Portland Commissioner Steve Novick, both members of the Decision Committee, attended and walked a section of the corridor along with members of the Community Advisory Group and public. There were a total of 33 attendees at the event including Community Advisory Group members Paul Grosjean, Joe Little, Dan McCue, Kem Marks and Cammy Pierson. Participants walked from the Safeway parking lot at SE 122nd to approximately SE 133rd and back. Alex asked for feedback from committee members about their experiences.
 - Paul Grosjean stated one thing that struck him during the site walk was the density of multi-housing properties along Powell. As a driver, he had not fully recognized the extent of people living right along the corridor, going to the grocery store, walking to the bus stop, etc. Until walking the road, he did not realize the number of people using the corridor not having the proper facilities.



- Dan McCue confirmed what Paul said and was also surprised by the density of homes along the corridor.
- Kem Marks pointed out that the day attendees walked for the event was a fairly calm day compared to many along the corridor.
- Cammy Pierson stated it also gave her a new perspective. She was surprised by the terrain, wide to narrow, rough to soft. She thought of her brother in a wheelchair and the challenges that would be encountered trying to move along the corridor.
- Joe Little noted the changes in elevation and the puddles that people have to navigate through on the side of the road. Joe counted the number of cars driving by and noted 22 cars every minute. This experience made him more aware of the dense use of the corridor.

Alex noted that he met Nicole Naegeli, a homeowner along Powell, during the site walk. She expressed great interest in the project and has a long history living on the corridor. She has volunteered to be a member on the Community Advisory Group and may attend future meetings.

- There was an Open House on March 9th in the Ron Russell Middle School Gymnasium with 27 people attending. The themes of the open house focused on the project footprint, draft Project Purpose and Need, and access management. In addition to project staff, ODOT Region 1 Manager Rian Windsheimer and Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick attended the event and discussed project concerns with members of the public. Some of the top concerns received from the event were related to tree removal, raised medians, crosswalks (with flashing beacons), and better lighting.
 - Cammy asked that out of all comments received, which ones were agency comments?
 - Project Team responded that all of the comments were from the community.
- Alex mentioned two upcoming outreach events:
 - Biking Tour and Bus Transit Tour. Dates have not yet been set but Community Advisory Group will be notified when they are.

3. Andy reviewed the Draft Project Purpose and Need Statement.

- Federal funding and regulatory agency funding requires a Purpose and Need statement in order to be eligible for potential funds.
- The Purpose and Need statement is ultimately owned by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and ODOT is supporting FHWA in drafting this statement.
- The version we are looking at today has been reviewed by FHWA and ODOT.
- Andy Johnson read the Purpose statement (see handout)
- As the team makes design decisions all considerations will be evaluated through the filter of the Purpose statement.
- This Purpose defines what types of funding buckets the project is eligible to seek.
- The Need statement identifies project needs that support the Purpose statement.
- Does anyone have questions about the Purpose and Need?
 - Cora Potter said thank you for adding verbiage that acknowledges Powell being a 'through' facility for all modes. She further stated that she supports the document.
 - Cammy asked if all modes are considered equal.



- Project Team stated yes.
- Kim Christiansen asked for clarification on where the 'Portland City Limits' lie at the east end of the project study area.
 - Team agreed and is trying to find the best way to identify how to make it clear within the Purpose and Need.
 - Dan McCue further stated it would be valuable to be clear about where this is and sited an example, "approximately east of SE 174th", or something similar.
- Other than the considerations noted, the Community Advisory Group was asked if they generally support the Draft Purpose and Need statement.
 - With a show of hands, the overall consensus of the Community Advisory Group was to support of the Draft Purpose and Need statement. No members said they did not support the Draft Purpose and Need.

4. Project Schedule

- Next Agency Working Group meeting is tomorrow, March 19th.
- Next Decision Committee meeting is Tuesday, March 31st.
- The project is in the process of examining existing conditions along the corridor including utility locates, trees, traffic volumes, parking, etc. to properly assess what kinds of modifications will be required in order to construct. This information helps establish the project footprint or Area of Potential Impact (API). The Project Team is in the process of documenting all potential impacts in order to design and construct a preferred layout. The goal is to avoid the impacts.
- FHWA will review the documentation that identifies if and where any potential impacts may lie in Summer 2015 and an Environmental Class Confirmation process will take place later in the Summer. This process will determine if an Environmental Assessment (EA) is necessary, or if another environmental process should be undertaken. If it is determined that there does not appear to be significant impacts and no EA is required, then the team could begin the design and construction process sooner than later if funding is available. However, if it is identified that an EA is required in order for the project to proceed, this process will continue through August 2016 and must occur before design can begin.
 - Examples of things that would be considered a "significant impact" would be: acquiring a lot of homes that have low income housing, removing a significant number of old growth trees, and any major impacts to minority communities. FHWA will review and decide whether this project has any "significant impacts".
- Andy clarified what the three Environmental Class categories are that the project can fall into:
 - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) occurs when you know there are significant impacts.
 - Environmental Assessment (EA) occurs when you do not know whether or not there are significant impacts, thus you go to find out.
 - Categorical Exclusion occurs when you know there are no significant impacts.

5. Discussion of Transportation Safety Concerns and Safety Trends from 2009-2013.

- Crashes by hour of day: most of the traffic is in the afternoon and not surprisingly the highest number of collisions.
 - These crashes are coded by police reports.

- One of the statistics from the data was that more pedestrian accidents occurred in the afternoon and later in the year when it is darker outside.
- When there are more users it is more likely to be a collision.
- Types of injury for crashes (by segments):
 - Collisions are also coded by severity – no injury, minor injury, moderate injury, and serious injury.
 - Highest type of injury was those that resulted with no injury.
 - While the number of serious and moderate injuries is at 6% and may not seem high, this is still a considerable number of people going to the hospital and higher than average.
 - The data was fairly consistent across segments.
 - Tom Lewis asked in comparison to other project areas if this seemed high.
 - Andy said yes, typically closer to 3%. He also noted that specifically for a two way road this is very high.
 - Kem clarified that these are reported collisions and that collisions not reported are not in these numbers.
 - Cora asked, what if by modifying the roadway that more car accidents occur.
 - Mike Mason responded that ‘severity’ is noted in the purpose and the intent of the project is to reduce the severity.
 - Alan Snook confirmed that if we can reduce the number of severe collisions than it is a huge success.
 - Segment 2 (SE 99th to 136th) is considered the highest priority area due to having the highest number of collisions.
 - Andy noted that in the traffic analysis all major intersections ranked with red, as being an area with high severity.
- Corridor Collision Types (in order of highest to lowest): tailgating, speeding, inattentive driver, reckless driving, and lane changing.
 - Kem asked, if accidents coming from someone passing on the right and going into the bike lane was assessed.
 - Andy responded that this depends on how they were coded in the police report.
- Andy presented collision data per segment
 - Collision Data from I-205 to SE 112th
 - Cora noted that there are some sidewalks and bike lanes that are not properly aligned with bus stops and the intrinsic challenge in getting to a bus stop without the proper crosswalks and access points.
 - Paul requested the collision data maps from the power point slides be made available for Community Advisory Group members.
 - a. Action: Project team will make the traffic data slides available online. Community Advisory Group is encouraged to provide comments.
 - Collision Data from SE 112th to 144th

- SE 122nd has the most number of crashes and severity of crashes, and the highest number of pedestrian counts.
 - Collision Data from SE 144th to 162nd
 - Collision Data from SE 162nd to 174th
 - Collisions have spiked around SE 174th
 - Paul noted how surprised he is to hear that SE 174th is in a race with SE 122nd for highest number of collisions, and yet has a significantly lower number of travelers.
 - Tom Lewis stated he would hope this project has positive influence on the north/south traffic as well as east/west, particularly as it relates to other projects.

6. Footprint Discussion

- The project footprint, or Area of Potential Impact (API), the aqua colored line in the exhibit, is typically bigger than the project area that will actually be constructed (the pink colored line in the exhibit). The API accounts for items such as air quality, environmental elements, wetlands, etc., that may intrinsically be effected by the project.
- The pink line denotes where the sidewalk ends, “potential future right of way”.
- Driveways are accounted for within the API.
- The space between the potential future right of way (pink line) and the API (aqua line) could be used by construction workers and for staging during project construction but then redressed back to normal state after construction.
- Bike lanes and sidewalks will be consistent all along the corridor.
- Along the north side of Powell across from SE 102nd and along Curtis Trailers, there is a raised grade and existing parking that needs to be further analyzed and thus why the API is bumped out to the extent shown.
- Cammy asked where ODOT right of way line is.
 - Andy clarified that the yellow line in the exhibit identifies the current/existing right of way.
 - Cammy noted that ODOT is not utilizing the existing right of way on the south side of the street along the Skate Plaza. Cammy feels her business is being penalized for the installation of the Skate Plaza, and will contest the impacts to her business. She feels it is unfair that the Skate Park was given to the ODOT right of way and that her business in the long run is being impacted by the change.
 - ODOT acknowledged Cammy’s concern and is open to further discussion.
 - Cammy went on to state she is adamantly opposed to this section of her property being impacted and will be following a legal contest to this issue.
- Where the API line is shown as bump out is where the project is taking potential impacts into account.
- Cora asked about parking areas and her concern with cars pulling out quickly and unforeseen into bike lanes.
 - Andy said this can be a challenging balance and it will depend on the specific property and the circulation needs of that property. These design elements will be revisited with more detail down the road.



- Team is working to better coordinate bus stops with crosswalks. At SE 119th there is a crosswalk with rapid flashing beacon and bus transit stops on both sides of the street. This is a good example of how the designers are trying to weigh the benefits and disadvantages on a section-by-section basis to promote safety.
 - Paul asked - will there be space for buses to pull off and out of traffic and bike lanes?
 - Andy stated not at this particular location.
- East of SE 122nd going eastbound there is a bus stop. Team is assessing the possibility of a bus pull off at this location.
- Jeff Owen with TriMet said a lot goes into considering whether a stop gets a bus turnout or not. For example, when vehicle speeds are fast it is good to have a pullout, however in areas where traffic is consistent it can often behoove bus transit customers for buses not to fully pull off so that they can merge back into consistent traffic more easily and reduce in and out times for customers.
- Paul noted – Trimet is an important aspect for people along the corridor but so are vehicles, and while transit customers might benefit, vehicles suffer significantly.
- Many people have been using existing ODOT right of way to park along the road, especially east of SE 122nd. These kinds of parking situations will be impacted.
- Kem reiterated what Cora said earlier about unforeseen cars pulling out of driveways. Kem noted there are a lot of these kinds of scenarios east of SE 122nd and can be very dangerous to bikes and pedestrians.
- There are planned crossings at SE 124th and SE 126th. Along the north side of Powell between SE 124th and 126th there will likely be some impacts to parking for the business in this location. Some ideas are being discussed to have parking/circulation provided in a nearby vacant area.
 - Kem suggested having raised buffered sidewalks for this area to eliminate potential safety concerns with vehicles trying to go around vehicles trying to turn.
- Jean Ky noted the need for safe sidewalks and crosswalk at SE 134th (particularly with flashing beacon) for people trying to cross to get to the Trimet stop. There is an elderly facility in this area and a concern for elders to be able to cross safely.
 - Kem confirmed the desire for flashing beacon crosswalk at this location, especially considering there are proposed bus stops on both sides of the street.
- Kem also noted there should be a curb at the SW corner of SE 136th.

7. Public Comment Period

- Cammy noted a proposed crosswalk in front of the skate park where there is a curve in the road. Does not think this is a safe place for a crosswalk and thinks relocation of this cross walk should be considered.
 - Mike responded that is a good suggestion and ODOT will look into this if it has not already been addressed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.