

## Community Task Force (CTF)

# MEETING NOTES

September 17, 2007

5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Multnomah County Building

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Meeting Objective

Recommend no more than four alternatives to the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) for inclusion in the Draft EIS.

### Key Points

- During the public comment period, some residents and local business owners expressed concern about impacts of the project on their properties. A park user talked about the impact of the Teal alignment on Sellwood Riverfront Park.
- CTF members viewed plan views showing 2, 3, and 4 lane cross sections on the bridge along with widened end treatments.
- The CTF discussed and voted on four bridge alignments, cross-sections and intersection designs to recommend to the PAG to be advanced for further study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

### Action Items Completed

- Staff responded to CTF requests for information about access control and the westside interchange.

### Action Items

- Laura Jackson and Brian Wilson were elected by secret ballot to represent the CTF at the next PAG meeting, October 1.

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# MEETING NOTES

### Attendees

**CTF Members:** Barbara Barber, Jason Barbour, Gary Barth, Tom Brown, Bill Dickey, John Fyre, Dorothy Gage, Laura Jackson, Ken Love, Richard Marantz, Tina Nunez, Lidwien Rahman, William Ross, Scott Thayer, Robert Wilhelm, Brian Wilson and Sharon Wood Wortman.

**Staff:** Multnomah County: Ian Cannon, Michael Eaton, David Martinez, Maria Rojo de Steffey, Mike Pullen; City of Portland: Tom Armstrong, Mauricio Leclerc, John Gillam; CH2M Hill: Steve Katko and Marcy Schwartz; Metro: John Gray, Robert Liberty; Cogan Owens Cogan: Elaine Cogan and Ellie Fiore.

**Guests:** Steve and Megan Adkins, Douglas Allen, Leslie Aranoff, Bruce Barclay, Jan Bohlman, Dick Brenneke, Michael Brodeur, Steve Chown, Craig Collins, R.B. and Janet Fuhrman, Emily Gardner, Dan Grogan, Kathleen Holahan, Bart Howard, Jim Howell, Sandy Hubbard, Jeff Jennings, Lauren Johnson, Arlene Kavlock; Philip Krain, Jim and Kathleen Larpenter, Marcia and John Lattig, Joann Maltis, Ed Muphy, Darren Muldoon, David Noble, Doug Prentice, Bob and Judy Ramsour, Lee Redman, Diana Richardson, Sam Rockwell, Lynn Rogers, Farn Shaw, Barbara Sloop, Dick Springer, Tom Walsh and Frank Zagunis.

### Welcome and Introductions

Elaine Cogan opened the meeting, thanking everyone for attending and asking members of the public to sign in to speak no more than three minutes each. Elaine reviewed the agenda and noted that the CTF will be asked to choose two of its members to present its recommended alternatives at the next PAG meeting, October 1.

### Public Comments

Jim Howell asked the CTF to keep a rehabilitation option. He requested that the CTF consider including a lower-level pedestrian pathway, an important consideration for the elderly and disabled. A lower-level path also would allow for better connections on either side of the bridge. He said an 18-foot-wide pathway could be put between the trusses with some narrow areas where necessary. This option is more desirable for bicyclists and pedestrians than to travel next to traffic.

Jeff Jennings, the owner of Staff Jennings Boating Centers, said that the Purple alignment is likely to have the most severe impact on his business. They would like to stay in their current location. He said he is willing to work with the City or County to make changes, but wants to avoid having to relocate his business. In answer to a CTF member question: about why he

believes Purple has the most impact, he answered it would eliminate the stoplight at the existing entrance to the Cemetery which he hoped can be remodeled to provide him with a new vehicle entrance/exit.

Dick Brenke, a 30-year resident of Sellwood Harbor Condominiums, said he is concerned with potential resident relocations. He would like the bridge alignment to stay as close as possible to the existing bridge and avoid relocations of homes and businesses.

John Fyre, a CTF member, said he is a lifetime Multnomah County resident who has been involved with SMILE for over 20 years. Mr. Fyre passed out a document describing his concern about the process. He said that the adopted Tacoma Main Street Plan identifies Tacoma as a main street and a collector. This plan should be considered within the scope of this project. Mr. Fyre read from a statement that many citizen concerns are related to cumulative and indirect impacts; he feels these are not being adequately addressed in this process. The neighborhood association general assembly voted in support of a bridge with only two lanes to adhere to the Main Street Plan; members in attendance opposed 4 lanes. The group is united and committed to a 2-lane alternative.

Marcia Lattig thanked the CTF members for their work. She said that many letters to the *Sellwood Bee* and comments to the CTF identified Sellwood Harbor residents as financially well-off. She said she is not a person of independent means and does not want to see her home destroyed and the community divided. She asked the CTF to consider a bridge that does not remove homes or businesses.

John Lattig distributed a handout with information on the alternatives supported by the work groups at the last meeting. He said that bridge costs will matter more at the funding level than they do in these rankings and asked whether a more expensive four-lane bridge is justified. The purple alignment causes residential relocations and impacts to Powers Marine Park. He asserted that the Teal alignment results in less bridge closure time, less noise, fewer business relocations and no homeowners displaced.

Mr. Lattig urged the CTF to advance Yellow and Teal, saying there are compelling reasons not to advance the Purple alignment.

Dan Grogan, president of the River Park Home Owners Association asked CTF members to keep in mind the impact of relocating 50 or more families as a result of the Blue alignment. He said this would be the equivalent of vacating Spokane Street from 7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

Ed Murphy reported on the September 5<sup>th</sup> SMILE meeting with PAG members Robert Liberty, Maria Rojo de Steffey, Sam Adams and Carolyn Tomei. It was explained that cost will be a major factor in getting the project funded. He said that City Councilman Adams stated he supports the Tacoma Main Street Plan and will fight to keep it intact. He added that the Purple alignment does not meet any community objectives as it is expensive and causes residential impacts and the removal of parkland. Teal and Yellow, with 57-foot widths meet CTF objectives.

Sam Rockwell said he is in favor of a two-lane bridge with a bike path underneath. He asked the engineers how much the bridge needs to be replaced. Michael Eaton explained that only the truss and piers could be preserved.

Sandy Hubbard supports preserving the current bridge alignment, including Yellow or Yellow South, and prefers rehabilitation. She said Teal would harm the riverfront, including access to the river and the amenities there. The park is in flood zone with variety of aquatic

wildlife. Many events are held at Sellwood Park and Sellwood Riverfront Park which may be affected by bridge shadows or noise from a new Teal bridge. She urged the CTF to preserve the waterfront and the historic bridge alignment.

R.B. Fuhman, a Sellwood resident since 1980, thanked the CTF members, saying he likes the two-lane cross-section and requested that the selected bridge not force him and his wife to relocate.

Tom Walsh, a Sellwood resident, said that all the alternatives under consideration will cause degradation to Sellwood neighborhood. The requirement that large trucks be accommodated will reduce livability of streets. The Tacoma Main Street Plan calls for Tacoma to be a safe pedestrian environment. The Sellwood Bridge planning seems to be disregarding this. Noise and visual impacts of the Teal alignment would have negative impacts on the park. Mr. Walsh prefers the Yellow alignment with cross-section I. He added that the City should be more active in protecting adopted plans and residents.

Douglas Allen distributed a handout discussing rehabilitation alternatives. He asked the CTF to forward both the L and I cross-sections to obtain more detail on the differences between the two in the EIS.

## **Public Involvement Update/Survey Results**

Mike Pullen provided a summary of the September 5<sup>th</sup> SMILE meeting. Four PAG members were present for the meeting, which included a presentation on Sellwood neighborhood planning. The group voted to support a two-lane bridge cross-section and the Tacoma Main Street Plan.

County staff also met with property owners to discuss the right-of-way process. Residents are concerned about the effects if there is inadequate funding for right-of-way acquisitions. The County also met with business owner Jeff Jennings and River View Cemetery manager David Noble, City and ODOT representatives were present to discuss how to maintain access to these businesses. Another meeting was held with Oaks Park board members, who reiterated the concerns they expressed at the August CTF meeting about an extended bridge closure. They requested winter construction to have fewer impacts on park attendance.

Next, Alex Cousins, consultant with Jeanne Lawson Associates, discussed the results of the third online survey, dealing with the alternatives. The survey was available online for about six weeks, and 3003 were completed.

He emphasized that the survey results are not statistically valid as survey respondents were self-selected and more likely to be more interested in the project's outcome. The survey is one of many tools to measure public opinion about the project.

There were controls to prevent people from completing the survey more than once.

The public opinion firm of Riley and Associates analyzed the demographics of the survey respondents and confirmed that while they generally mirror the city's population, over half survey respondents were SE Portland residents; thirty percent have 97202 zip codes. Most respondents use the bridge to commute.

In response to a question from a CTF member about how many trucks used the bridge in the past before weight limit restrictions were applied, staff answered that they were about 5% of bridge traffic. Commercial vehicle drivers are somewhat under-represented in the survey, while bicyclists were somewhat over-represented.

Bridge replacement is the preferred option for all respondents. The least favorite option is bridge rehabilitation with the Yellow Center alignment. A majority favor the roundabout, though bicyclists do not. Cross-section "I" with a 31-foot width was the most popular cross-section.

Most respondents oppose a temporary detour bridge, as it is more costly. Opinions are evenly divided on Phase II seismic upgrades.

Alex continued that Yellow Center, Purple and Teal are the most popular alignments. There is some confusion about how Yellow South is distinct from Yellow Center. Cross-section alternatives are fairly evenly supported.

Twenty-eight percent of survey takers support the combination approach, which preserves the existing bridge for bikes and pedestrians and builds a new bridge for vehicles.

When asked what else they would like to share, responses tend to vary by location. Neighborhood residents favor limiting traffic and bridge width and neighborhood impacts, while other respondents stress increasing bridge capacity and finding regional transportation solutions.

### **Response to CTF request for information re: access control**

Michael Eaton updated the CTF on access control as agreed upon by the PAG and ODOT.

The west side Sellwood Bridge interchange requires access restriction for 1500 feet to the north and south of the interchange. This is the reason all the alignment options require Staff Jennings to relocate its access point. It is highly unlikely that ODOT will consider an access signal onto Highway 43 unless a driveway has very high vehicle volume.

For the purposes of the EIS, it will be assumed that full access to River View Cemetery is possible from the west end interchange. Full access to the cemetery will be compared to reduced-access alternatives. Any access would have to be part of the interchange. ODOT and CH2M Hill are planning to meet with Staff Jennings to further examine access issues and possible solutions.

CTF member Barbara Barber asked whether the same access rules would apply if the bridge was rehabilitated and said she wished this information had been available before alignment discussions. CTF member John Fyre said that committee has spent a lot of time discussing bicycle access to the River View Cemetery, but it is private property, which means public bicycle access could be revoked at any time or that undeveloped cemetery land could be redeveloped, thus affecting the bicycle access issues.

### **Review of alternatives from previous CTF meeting**

Marcy Schwartz briefly reviewed the alternatives the small groups selected at the last CTF meeting. Steve Katko, CH2M Hill, showed a plan view of how the Purple alignment and the interchange footprint impacts the River View Funeral Home. This was prepared in response to a specific question from CTF members about how this could affect bike access.

In the following discussion, questions and comments from the CTF are in italics, with replies by consultants and staff in regular print.

*What is the distance between the south interchange ramp and the funeral home?*  
About 50 feet.

With the Yellow Center alignment as an example, Steve also showed plan views of the entire length of the bridge, with two, three and four lane cross-sections. The west end interchange requires the bridge to widen to five lanes. This would taper to two, three or four lanes and then widen or narrow at the east end to three lanes to match Tacoma Street.

Details of other cross-sections also were shown. It was noted that cross-section D allows for only about 600 feet of travel in the bus-only lane.

*The east-side interchange design is likely to cause cut-through traffic on Spokane if traffic is backed up on Tacoma where it narrows to two lanes.*

It has not yet been discussed whether access to side streets can be restricted.

The east side scenarios are not part of the bridge alternatives, but were developed in response to CTF members' concerns. The EIS will include a detailed traffic study of the east side effects.

*Why does a two-lane bridge need a five-lane approach to the west end intersection?*

The bridge widens to four or five lanes at the intersection to prevent vehicles from backing up on Highway 43. Extra lanes are for storage of vehicles on the bridge rather than on 43.

*"Tacoma Street is the bottleneck. The five lane signal at the west end moves the traffic jam onto the bridge. The last time I checked, it is easier to build a parking lot on land (e.g. Macadam) than to build one in the air over a river (on the bridge)."*

Steve then showed slides that clarify the distinction between the two Yellow alignments. The Yellow Center alignment can be built for either a rehabilitation or replacement bridge, with a cross-section up to 57 feet wide.

The Yellow South alignment widens the existing bridge footprint to the south from its current 31-foot alignment. Construction can be staged to allow traffic to continue without having to build a detour bridge. It may cause fewer relocations than Purple.

## **CTF discussion and agreement on four alternative interchange, alignment and cross-section combinations to be analyzed in the Draft EIS**

Elaine reminded members that the goal of this meeting was to vote on four alternatives to recommend for the Draft EIS. She reviewed the choices from the small groups in the previous meeting's discussion:

- 3 groups: signal, rehab, Yellow Center L
- 3 groups: signal, replacement, Teal D
- 2 groups: signal, replacement, Purple C' or C
- 2 groups: signal replacement, Teal C
- 1 group: signal, replacement, Teal E (with 2 transit-only lanes rather than 4 travel lanes)
- 1 group: signal, replacement, Yellow Center L

Marcy explained that an alternative consists of one interchange, one alignment and one cross-section, although hybrids are possible as new information becomes available during the EIS process.

Elaine pointed out that the CTF has consistently favored the signalized west-end intersection. The CTF voted (18 yes, 0 no) to eliminate the Roundabout Interchange type and forward only the signalized type to the PAG..

Lidwien Rahman recommended including the Yellow South alignment, as it may have fewer impacts than Purple. Bill Dickey added that Yellow South may eliminate the need for a detour bridge. The CTF voted to recommend Yellow South as one option.

Tom Brown suggested a Pink-Teal hybrid that would lessen impacts to the park.

Brian Wilson proposed a Yellow South with signal intersection and D cross-section.

Marcy asked whether CTF members want to forward a rehabilitation option. She explained that this does not have to be included in the EIS, though a "no-build" alternative will be included. The latter means maintaining the status quo, including the minimum level needed to keep the existing level of service. Rehabilitation requires major improvements.

Laura Jackson suggested forwarding a rehabilitation option in response to community feedback addressing the historic value of the bridge. The CTF voted (14 yes, 2 no "not enough information") to include a rehabilitation option in the final recommendations.

The CTF agreed to consider the following alignment options:

- Teal
- Purple
- Yellow Center
- Yellow South
- Teal/Pink hybrid

CTF member and staff comments:

*John: eliminate Purple.*

*Tom Brown: Made a motion to eliminate the Purple alignment because of impacts Powers Park and the condominiums to the south.*

*Richard Marantz: Is anything gained by keeping Purple on the table?*

*Marcy: Yellow South may displace fewer condominium owners, but at this time it is not possible to know if there is a difference.*

*Ian: Purple could be built in one phase with a shorter construction period. It also has more flexibility for structure type. Yellow South preserves some of the existing alignment, although the bridge would be new. It would allow traffic to keep moving during construction. Both Yellow South and Purple will have impacts to the condominiums to the south.*

*Laura: forward Yellow Central (rehabilitation), Yellow South, Purple and the Teal/Pink hybrid in order to study as many alternatives as possible.*

*Richard: the Yellow and Yellow South alignments include interchanges in different locations.*

*Lidwien: Yellow South can either include a detour bridge or preserve use of the existing structure.*

*Jason: The CTF has received a lot of new information tonight, including details on a four-five lane west side interchange. He suggested the need for another meeting before voting.*

*Bill Dickey: the new information is clarification the CTF requested at earlier meetings. He suggested voting on Laura's alternatives to move ahead the basic bridge alignments the small groups agreed on last time.*

*Tom: I supported Purple at the August meeting because I knew it was not a final decision.*

*Barbara Barber: I would be comfortable with forwarding the four alignments Laura proposed as long as there is a real opportunity to make changes after the draft EIS.*

*Marcy: There will be an opportunity to hybridize and mix-match elements during selection of the locally preferred alternative. Any additional analysis to support the hybridization would be completed as part of the Final EIS .*

*Richard: most of the CTF was surprised to see five lanes on the west side interchange, but this does not necessarily affect any alignment choices.*

*Marcy: the November meeting will include more detailed information on the four alternatives selected by the PAG. .*

*Richard: are there advantages to preserving the Teal west side intersection rather than the Teal-Pink hybrid?*

The hybrid would preserve some parkland and allow the most flexibility to work with Staff Jennings. The company has expressed its preference to maintain the existing location of access or a new access at the cemetery signal. This was rejected by ODOT on the basis of access and safety policies.

John Gillam, with the City of Portland: Tacoma Street is actually a three-lane cross-section with two travel lanes. Whatever bridge alignment is chosen will tie into this at SE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

*Tina Nunez: does keeping Purple enhance the analysis?*

*Scott Thayer: Many people are concerned about a lack of information, which suggests that forwarding more options will generate more new information.*

*Gary: Alternatives need to be limited due to limited funding.*

*John: what does “fine-tuning” mean?*

Marcy: Information available following the EIS can be used to create a new mix and match of alignments with cross-sections. It is important that the alignments and cross-sections are ones that have been analyzed in the Draft EIS.

The CTF voted down (4 yes, 14 no) the motion to eliminate the Purple alignment.

The CTF then voted on Laura’s suggestion—Yellow Central (rehabilitation), Yellow South, Purple and the Teal/Pink. These alignments include three locations for a west side interchange, a rehabilitation alternative, and a northern bridge alignment. The suggestion passed (16 yes, 1, no, 1 abstention).

The cross-sections that the CTF supported at the last meeting are C, C’, D, E and L.

Cross-section options for the rehabilitation bridge are A, I, and L.

*Bill: Citizens seem to prefer the lower-level bike and pedestrian path (cross-section I) although the CTF and working groups (including the bike and pedestrian group) do not. There are mixed opinions on how safe the lower-level deck would be.*

*Scott: It would be helpful to study option I further to get more information on the 14-foot width.*

*Gary: Let’s defer to the bike and pedestrian working group.*

*Lidwien: Favors studying both options, but would support forwarding L only.*

*William Ross: The 57’ cross-section (L) adds more flexibility for maintenance, cars pulling over, etc.*

*John: advocated for A (53') and I (31')*

*Laura agreed.*

*William: The bicycle and pedestrian groups' wishes should be respected.*

The CTF voted on each of the three rehabilitation bridge cross-sections as follows: L-15 yes; , I-2 yes; A-1 yes.

*Bill: Pair the Teal-Pink hybrid with cross-section D, as three groups agreed on that combination last time.*

*Richard: questioned the use of the transit lane option, given the narrowing of the bridge approaching Tacoma.*

*Gary: a wider bridge preserves very long-term flexibility.*

*Jason: it would have been nice to know that transit lanes would not cover the entire length of the bridge.*

The CTF voted (9 yes, 5 no, 3 abstentions) in favor of forwarding cross-section D for the Teal-Pink hybrid.

Tom Brown (?) had to leave early.

*Gary: forward cross-section C.*

*Barbara: Purple or Yellow South could minimize impacts to homes by having two lanes.*

The CTF voted (17 yes, 0 no) to forward cross-section C for the Yellow South alignment.

*Laura: forward one cross-section with a lower-level deck (K).*

*Bill: forward cross-section K with the Purple alignment. The public did favor a lower deck in the survey.*

*Alex: in the survey, K is supported by 47% of cyclists, but many write-in responses expressed concerns about transients.*

*Jason: there are security concerns for bikers and emergency vehicles on the lower deck.*

*Barbara: concerned about putting a four-lane cross-section on the Purple alignment.*

The CTF discussed whether a lower-level deck should be considered with cross-section D (which has dedicated transit lanes).

*John: K violates the Tacoma Street Main Street plan.*

*Barbara: four lanes of traffic would bottleneck at SW 43 and at Taylors Ferry.*

*Laura: engineers did not feel four lanes of auto traffic are beneficial with only three lanes, on Tacoma.*

*Richard: favors D with a lower deck rather than K.*

*Barbara: the long-range planning perspective should include transit lanes and not assume only more traffic lanes.*

The CTF voted (7 yes, 8 no) down a motion to put K (four lanes) onto Purple.

The CTF voted (1 yes, 16 no) down a motion to put modified K (2 traffic + 2 transit lanes) onto Purple.

John Gillam suggested that cross-section K could be striped with three-lanes, which would allow a good transition onto Tacoma on the east side, with a fourth lane possible in the future. This allows for both sidewalks and bike lanes and has flexibility.

*Brian: advocated for the three-lane compromise position.*

*Bill: a lower deck would increase flexibility on the street surface.*

The CTF voted (11 yes, 4 no) in favor of a three-lane cross-section (K prime) for the Purple alignment.

In summary, the four alternatives agreed upon are as follows:

- Yellow Center, Rehab, L.
- Teal-Pink hybrid, D
- Yellow South, C
- Purple, three-lane K'

### **Choose CTF representative for PAG meeting October 1**

In a vote by secret ballot, CTF members chose Laura Jackson and Brian Wilson to represent them at the next PAG meeting October 1.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.