

Community Task Force (CTF)

MEETING NOTES

October 15, 2007

5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

SMILE Station

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meeting Objectives

Report on PAG recommendations for bridge alternatives to be studied in the EIS and begin discussion about bridge types and financing options.

Key Points

- Some CTF members expressed disappointment that some of the PAG decisions, vary from CTF recommendations.
- The group reviewed the six preliminary bridge types forwarded by the bridge type working group.
- The CTF was briefed on local financing options for the bridge.

Action Items Completed

- No action was taken.

Action Items

- Acting on the request of CTF members, staff will request that PAG members attend a CTF meeting.
- More detailed information on bridge types, including double deck possibilities and views showing how a bike/ped and vehicle bridge, recommended by the PAG, can look side by side, will be presented at the November 12th meeting.

Community Task Force (CTF)

MEETING NOTES

Attendees

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

Staff: Multnomah County: Ian Cannon, Michael Eaton, Mike Lynch, David Martinez, Mike Pullen; City of Portland: Mauricio Lecleric, CH2M Hill: Marcy Schwartz and Sam Seskin; Metro: Tim Collins; Cogan Owens Cogan: Elaine Cogan and Ellie Fiore; L.Y.Line, Bridge Consultants: David Goodyear.

Guests: Aaron Abdulrahimz, Steve and Megan Adkins, Douglas Allen, Kelly Burke, Teresa Dunbar, Dave Goodyear, Sandy Hubbard, Jeff Jennings, John and Marcia Lattig, Marychris Mass, Eric Norberg, Lynn Rogers, Tom Walsh.

Welcome and Introductions

Elaine Cogan opened the meeting, thanking everyone for attending. She explained that this was an informational meeting only and no decisions would be made.

Public Comments

Diana Richardson circulated a written statement and asked how the tie in of the Yellow alternative at Tacoma would be considered.

PAG Meeting Report

CTF members expressed appreciation for how well Brian Wilson and Laura Jackson represented the CTF at the PAG meeting on October 1st.

Brian and Laura described their presentation to the PAG went. Brian gave an introduction, followed by Laura, who explained why the CTF selected a rehabilitation option and supported only signalized intersections. Then they each presented two of the CTF recommended alternatives. Brian and Laura reported that the PAG members seemed appreciative of CTF members' efforts, but quickly dismissed some of their ideas and added new bridge elements to the alternatives. The roundabout is back for consideration, as well as the trumpet interchange. A bike and pedestrian-only bridge also will be added to be studied in the EIS.

County staff explained a matrix that shows the difference between the CTF and PAG alternatives.

Ian Cannon explained the reasons for the PAG's choices. They did not forward a purple alignment as a response to right-of-way concerns from citizens and local business owners. PAG members also agreed that studying a separate bike and pedestrian bridge provides an opportunity to study additional interchange options, as

bicyclists and pedestrians would not use the interchange. In summary, the elements the PAG added are the separate bridge, roundabout and trumpet interchanges and a narrow bridge somewhat similar to the K cross-section.

The PAG preserved the CTF recommendation for Yellow South and Teal/Pink hybrid alternatives. The PAG asked staff to refine their recommendations into discrete alternatives. This was done with a memo sent to the PAG requesting their concurrence.

Marcy said that the EIS will examine a rehabilitation option with and without a detour bridge and Phase II seismic upgrades.

Note: Remarks by the CTF are in italics, followed by staff and consultant responses.

William Ross: Why is a roundabout forwarded with the 57 foot cross-section that includes bicyclists and pedestrians?

The intent is to analyze how the roundabout functions both with and without bicyclists and pedestrians.

Ken Love: Will the Staff Jennings and cemetery accesses be required to be 1500 feet from the bridge intersection?

The issue is still unresolved. It is assumed access will be provided for the funeral home as part of either a signalized or roundabout intersection. Providing access to Staff Jennings is more problematic. ODOT is working with Staff Jennings and project engineers to find an acceptable solution. ODOT has not made any guarantees regarding access but needs to do further analysis. All parties understand that it is not acceptable for the entrance to Staff Jennings to be very far away from the facility.

Lidwien Rahman: It seems that staff are responsible for communicating between two groups, but PAG members do not seem to receive the CTF's message. It seems as though the PAG basically ignored the CTF recommendations. She suggested that PAG members should come to a CTF meeting to address the group. CTF members are citizen volunteers and the PAG should take the time to explain their choices, including the inclusion of the roundabout.

Brian: I give staff a lot of credit. It seemed like the CTF recommendations were ignored at the time (of the meeting) but the staff has demonstrated how the PAG preserved most of the CTF alternatives.

Laura: The PAG is playing by different rules and some of their recommendations don't meet the project purpose/needs statement. It would be great to have PAG members come to a CTF meeting to explain the changes they made.

Richard Marantz: One of the threshold criteria is that the bridge concept must find connections to existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities and off-street paths. The cemetery is designated as an off-street path. Option C with the trumpet interchange does

not meet this threshold criterion. Cemetery Executive Director, David Noble, would have no incentive to keep the road open without vehicular access.

It is not known with certainty whether the trumpet interchange would eliminate access. ODOT and staff will try to find a way to provide vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access. The trumpet interchange creates challenges for bicycle/pedestrian access.

Richard: If ODOT does not allow access, the bridge would not meet the threshold criteria. We are very far along in the process with an alternative that does not meet the basic criteria. There has not been any public input on these issues because they were not on the table.

Barbara Barber: Can the PAG alternatives be hybridized?

New alternatives can be made from the bridge elements the PAG has forwarded. The next major phase involves narrowing the alternatives to one option. We can work on bringing the two groups closer together during this process.

Barbara: I would be disappointed if only a few PAG members attended a CTF meeting they were invited to.

The group can request a joint meeting.

Richard: I am concerned about ODOT's veto power, since they are not closely involved in the process. There is one ODOT representative on the PAG.

Brian: ODOT brought back the trumpet.

ODOT has been very involved with staff.

Richard: Has ODOT laid out their decision criteria?

Any alternative will require an exception, because none will meet the criteria outright.

Lidwien: ODOT only has approval over access standards, not the bridge or its alignment.

ODOT will look at the interchange as part of its system. What happens at an interchange can impact the function of other roads, including Highway 43. We will know a lot more when technical analysis is done.

John Fyre: I have an issue with the process, because there are two separate processes.

Tom Brown: I do not favor having the joint meeting too early in the process. He would like to meet after the EIS when there is information on each of the alternatives.

Barbara: I agree that it would be helpful to have more information, but would like to meet with the PAG members sooner to bring the two processes closer together.

Brian: At the PAG meeting some firm policy positions were expressed that CTF members were not aware of.

Tom: The CTF is supposed to make decisions based on value judgments, not policy.

Tina Nunez: The value of the joint CTF/PAG meeting would be for the CTF to be able to explain their values and to understand the PAG policy objectives. I support meeting with the PAG sooner.

The two groups could meet more than once.

David Martinez, a representative of County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey: PAG members also have constituencies/interests to represent and communicate with and other internal discussions are always going on as well. Each member has some expertise depending on their jurisdiction. It is important that the PAG hears about how CTF member reacted to their decisions.

Although there seems to be a general dissatisfaction with the PAG's decisions, the CTF thanked staff for bringing out the commonalities between the two committees' recommendations. The CTF is in agreement that there should be a meeting with the PAG, although there is some disagreement about the timing of the meeting.

Tom: Can the Multnomah County Commissioners override the PAG?

No. That is not part of the process. But FHWA must approve the preferred alternative at the end of the process.

David: The PAG reached a milestone at its last meeting by selecting the alternatives for the EIS. Their rationale was to get more information on many elements.

Richard: The bigger problem for CTF members is what was not recommended.

Jason Barbour: Several CTF members have attended PAG meetings, but there has not been as much PAG representation at CTF meetings.

Richard: The trumpet interchange was not carefully considered by the CTF. Can the trumpet's ramps be used for transit?

This is not known yet. In December, staff will bring more developed alternatives to the CTF before the EIS begins.

Tina: When is the next opportunity for public input?

At the end of November, the public will have the opportunity to comment on the bridge types to be analyzed in the draft EIS. After release of the draft EIS next year, the public will have input on selection of the preferred alternative .

Barbara: Most of the PAG members are elected and their role is to make decisions. She agreed they should strengthen ties, but would also like the PAG members to explain their thinking. CTF members may feel more comfortable about their decision with improved communication.

Comment [MJE1]: Pronoun is odd in this paragraph

David : I will bring this message to Maria, who is the chair of the PAG. I will suggest the idea of a joint meeting.

Comment [MJE2]: Pronoun in what appears to be a quote.

Brian: The idea should also be shared with Metro Councilor Robert Liberty, ODOT representative Jason Tell and Clackamas County Commissioner Lynn Peterson.

Dorothy Gage: I feel like the PAG members' opinions are set. It seems that they disregarded the CTF and public.

Tom: Sellwood residents are likely to speak out against alternatives they don't like.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Subcommittee Report

PAG member and Metro Councilor Robert Liberty attended a recent meeting at which an alignment for a bike and pedestrian only bridge recommended by the PAG was discussed. The subcommittee suggested that the bridge have a high elevation at SE Nehalem and SE Grand, cross over Highway 43 and thus, continue access into cemetery. Bicyclists and pedestrians could connect from the bridge to Highway 43 and the Greenway.

Tina: There is a big tower and church in that area.

The locations were chosen to allow the bridge to cross at an elevation that would clear the navigation channel, eastside streetcar and westside light rail.

Tom: I am surprised that this bridge is being put forward and studied at this time in the process.

PAG members expressed the opinion that the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians were driving the interchange selection and want to take bikes and pedestrians out of the discussion to allow for more choices. It may be less expensive overall, as the two bridges could be built to two different standards.

Tom: The bike/pedestrian bridge will still need to be able to accommodate emergency vehicles.

It may be more cost-effective and feasible to build signature elements into a smaller bridge.

This proposed bridge alignment will be engineered and brought back to the group in December.

Laura: At the PAG meeting, there seemed to be different opinions about whether to separate bikers and pedestrians from vehicle traffic.

Lidwien: I haven't had a chance to check in with my constituency. Members opposed leaving the old bridge as a bike and pedestrian-only bridge, but have not discussed a new bridge.

Brian: Robert Liberty said he didn't believe bike commuters would really use the Sellwood Bridge and would use eastside routes instead.

Richard: The Sellwood Bridge and cemetery provide the only east-west bike route for a long distance. Eliminating that route would impact many commuters including Lewis and Clark students and Washington County workers. The importance of this east-west route for the bike community has not been fully communicated to the PAG.

Lidwien: The bike and pedestrian working group assumed that the new bridge would be better than the existing structure and that the needs of this community are well-established.

Richard: This bridge was not proposed by the bike/pedestrian community. They haven't had a chance to "vet" this alternative.

Tina: One issue to consider is whether the use of a separate bridge by bicyclists and pedestrians could be enforced.

Bridge Types

Marcy explained that this is the last milestone the CTF will consider before preparation of the draft EIS document is initiated. Tonight we will begin our discussion of bridge types. On November 12th, the group will continue the discussion. At the November 28th public meeting, information will be shared with the public. At the December 3rd meeting, the CTF will make its recommendations on bridge types to be carried forward into the EIS.

Bridge type is not the same as design; the latter will take place much later in the process.

CTF and bridge type working group member, Sharon Wood Wortman introduced bridge designer, David Goodyear.

Sharon: I have known and admired David's work as a bridge designer for years. Some examples of his bridges include the Crooked River Bridge in Oregon and the new Foss Waterway Bridge in Tacoma.

David has met twice with the bridge type working group, whose members include Scott Thayer and Sharon Wood-Wortman/ CTF; Gil Kelley/Portland Planning Bureau; Bruce Johnson/ODOT; Robert Perron/Perron Collaborative; Paddy Tillett/Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Architects/Willamette Light Brigade.

He distributed a handout showing key attributes the working group believes are important for selecting bridge types:

- Harmony with landscape and setting
- Distinctive character

- Sense of place and safety for user's experience
- Flexibility to accommodate current and future uses
- Minimize river and land use impacts
- Life long utility and durability

Next, David showed slides of the six bridge types recommended by the working group for the CTF to consider. He explained that they are generic types and architectural details can be added later during bridge design. The types are the segmental box girder, cable-stayed, extradosed, through arch, deck arch and delta frame.

Laura: What applies to the proposed bike/pedestrian-only span? Will this working group discuss the same issues for the new bridge?

This issue has not been discussed by the working group yet, but will be addressed.

David then distributed a handout summarizing additional basic information about each bridge type. The box girder is less amenable to a double-deck structure. Bridges with no superstructure are more flexible. It is difficult to have staged construction with some bridge types. The box girder is the best suited to a curved alignment.

Any new bridge will be designed to current seismic standards. They are more stringent for new bridges than for retrofitting existing structures.

Jason: Many people have expressed preference for the current bridge. Could any of these mimic it?

Truss bridges such as the Sellwood are very expensive and inefficient. Therefore, they are not very popular today.

Dorothy: Do any of these bridge types lend themselves to cantilevers (future widening)? Do they all have bikes and pedestrians accommodated in the design?

Nearly all the bridges could accommodate a cantilever, though this would be very expensive in certain cases.

At the open house and on the website, the public will be asked to choose from two bridge type categories, one of which will be moderately priced and the other more expensive. The box girder and delta frame are typically moderately priced.

The Yellow South alternative may limit bridge type choice as it assumes phased construction. Since these choices are constrained by the alternatives, we expect the CTF to select two bridge types (a moderate and a higher-priced type) for each alternative.

Lidwien: The proposed new alternative poses the question of how the two bridges would look together.

Perspective has a lot to do with bridge alignment. Parallel bridges should generally be similar bridge types. It could be more challenging to make them visually harmonious with very different bridge types. If there are separate bridges, one would be rehabilitated,

which would mean the new bridge would need to fit with the existing the Sellwood bridge.

Tina handed out a sketch of a bridge she asked David Goodyear and the CTF to consider. It is a suspension bridge with an S-shaped curved bike/pedestrian path underneath, but could be constructed as cable-stayed.

Tina: Would the cost of this type of structure be similar to a separate bike/pedestrian bridge?

It may be similar. David will present this drawing to the working group.

Richard: The working group should consider cross-sections with more information on the double-decker option, including the width of piers.

The lower-level deck was not on the last agenda and has not been studied. They can look at long-view perspectives.

Richard: Please present more information about the under-deck detail with bridge types at a future meeting.

Laura: The water sports constituency I represent will want as few piers as possible.

Fewer piers on a cable-stay bridge make towers twice as tall. David can show this in some bridge renderings.

Sharon: Please create another process timeline for the next several months.

Finance and Revenue

Sam Seskin, transportation director for CH2M HILL , reviewed slides summarizing financing options for the Sellwood Bridge project.

He explained that a financial plan is required for federally funded projects estimated between \$100-500 million. Some funds have been allocated for design and land acquisition for the Sellwood Bridge project, but actual funding needs are much higher for construction. Sellwood is one of many unfunded projects in the city and county.

Any funding package must include local options. Among the menu of alternatives available in Oregon are the following:

- 1) Fuel tax surcharge. This can be levied by local governments. This is a good revenue source in Multnomah County partly because non-residents buy gasoline in the county.
- 2) Vehicle registration fee. This is levied biennially and would need to be approved by County voters.
- 3) Transportation utility fee. This often is issued for maintenance and is based on estimated trips based on property usage. More funds for capital projects may be available.

4) Property tax levy. This can be at either the City or County level, or both, and must be authorized by voters.

These tools could be used by Multnomah or two or three of the metro area counties (Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas).

Jason: Would the funds be dedicated to the Sellwood Bridge or connected to other local funding packages?

Tonight's presentation focuses only on the Sellwood Bridge as funding sources are a required element of the EIS.

Lidwien: What about raising funds from Multnomah and Clackamas County residents only, based on who the primary users are?

Thinking about the relationship between payers and those who use the facility is an important political consideration.

Sam continued that the fifth source available are tolls. They can pay for construction and/or manage travel demand. Willingness to pay is a key consideration when calculating revenue from tolls. The estimates he presented assume a uniform fee for all hours and all days. A toll of \$1.70 on the Sellwood Bridge would maximize revenue and finance \$35 to \$105 of the capital costs of a new Sellwood Bridge. However, tolling is likely to decrease traffic on the bridge and the cost for collecting tolls on only one bridge could be substantial.

Tolling all non-interstate bridges would finance \$300 to \$900 million while reducing the amount of traffic diversion.

Implementation options include bonds and public-private partnerships. A revenue stream is needed to finance the bonds. Many funding sources for public-private partnerships are available.

Tom: Why not toll roads that drivers can't avoid?

Tina: Are there any cost estimates that account for lower maintenance costs resulting from less traffic?

That has not been estimated. Two-thirds of drivers who avoid a toll bridge will use another bridge, increasing maintenance costs for those facilities.

Jason: There are potential issues with tolling bicyclists or other users. There will be impacts on low-income commuters.

Equity becomes an issue with any kind of tax.

These cost estimates are a largely academic study upon which to base policies. The EIS will provide further information.

Barbara: Where do parking ticket revenues go? In LA, parking tickets are the second largest source of revenue for the city.

This presentation was informational. The CTF is not involved in any decisions regarding funding.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.