

Summary – Meeting #2

Community Advisory Group – I-5 Willamette River Bridge Project

*Jan. 31, 2007, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Bascom Room, Eugene Public Library (100 West 10th Ave.)*

ATTENDANCE

CAG Members

- David Sonnichsen – Chair, CPC for Whilamut Natural Area
- Pat French – Planner and CPC Representative, Willamalane Park & Recreation District
- Philip Richardson – *Alternate*, Eugene Parks and Open Space Division
- Jan Wostmann – *Alternate*, Laurel Hill Valley Citizens Association
- John Barofsky – Co-Chair, Fairmount Neighbors
- Bob Kline – Chair, Harlow Neighbors
- Dave Carvo – Vice Chair, Glenwood Neighborhood Group
- Charlotte Behm – Representative, Springfield Neighborhood (and member, CPC for Whilamut Natural Area)
- Rene L. Benoit – Membership Director, Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Chris Ramey – Director and Architect, University Planning Office, University of Oregon

Resource Team

- Ann Sanders – ODOT Project Leader/Area Representative for Lane County, ODOT Region 2
- Tim Dodson – ODOT Project Liaison/CPM, ODOT Bridge Delivery Unit
- Lou Krug – Project Manager, Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners
- James Gregory – Environmental Task Leader, Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners
- Jamie Damon – Public Involvement Coordinator, Jeanne Lawson Associates
- Kalin Schmoldt – Public Involvement Assistant, Jeanne Lawson Associates

Other Attendees

- Charles Biggs – CPC for Whilamut Natural Area (alternate for David Sonnichsen)

HANDOUTS

- Agenda
- Summary of CAG Meeting #1
- Revised Committee Protocols
- Revised Purpose and Need Statement
- Draft Goals and Objectives
- Revised contact list
- Public Involvement Plan
- Project constraints and bridge alternatives

WELCOME

Jamie Damon introduced herself and explained that she works with Randa and may be facilitating the next CAG meeting.

Jamie said that she had no problems with alternates sitting at the table when there is room, though she noted that each group should speak through the primary representative.

There were no members of the public present to give comment.

Jamie outlined the agenda, noting that there would be discussion of the project Goals and Objectives along with the Purpose and Need. She explained that the discussion of bridge alternatives is intended to cover a broad range of options and emphasized that no specific plans have been made regarding any particular design.

Jan Wostmann and Philip Richardson introduced themselves as alternates standing in for Rich Hazel and Trevor Taylor.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Summary of Meeting #1 – “Christ” should be changed to “Chris” on page 2.

Posting of meeting summaries on website – Lou noted concerns about ensuring a transparent process while also encouraging free discussion. He asked whether the group would feel less free to discuss contentious ideas if meeting summaries are posted for the public to view. Lou noted that the PDT had recommended posting a briefer discussion of the meeting for public review and making full summaries available to the public upon request. Brief summaries would list the issues discussed and would be distributed through Joe Harwood and the press office.

Several members of the group expressed interest in erring on the side of transparency and keeping the summaries as available as possible. Jamie proposed distributing the notes to the CAG for approval before making them public, giving the CAG an opportunity to review and comment, and then posting the notes on a public but non-primary webpage.

David Sonnichsen asked about the reasons for attributing comments to anonymous “members” as opposed to specific individuals in the Meeting #1 summary. Kalin explained that the change was made after the meeting to encourage frank discussion, though it was a matter for the group to decide. The group agreed that comments should be attributed to specific individuals and the notes should be posted publicly after approval at the subsequent CAG meeting.

John Barofsky asked about access to PDT meeting summaries. Lou said that they were available upon request.

Revised protocols – Jamie noted that recommended changes to the protocols had been incorporated per last meeting's discussion. She also noted that new protocols may be added as necessary.

PROJECT UPDATE

Lou explained that the PDT had conducted a similar exercise with the “Issues to Consider” posters and had placed dots next to their priorities. He noted that the PDT had also discussed bridge types. Lou said that they will be keeping the Eugene and Springfield city councils updated. On the schedule, he noted that there will not be an update to Eugene in February, while they were still waiting to hear from Springfield. He explained that the cities would be inviting the team when appropriate.

Schedule discussion and location – After some discussion of schedules, the CAG decided to hold the next three meetings on February 26, March 14, and May 8. The group felt that the library was an appropriate venue.

PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT

James reviewed the Purpose and Need, noting that the purpose is the “why” and need is the “what.” He explained that they had made changes to the Need statement based upon comments from the previous CAG meeting. He said they had removed extraneous information and attempted to improve the readability. James noted that Rich Hazel had encouraged changing the wording of the project purpose to “maintaining safety and improving connectivity.” James explained that the PDT had discussed the suggestion but had decided to maintain the wording statement as it is: “improve safety and maintain connectivity.”

James said that the PDT used a “dot” exercise to draft goals and objectives from the *Issues to Consider*. He explained that Goals are the high level statements that provide context, while Objectives are statements of what the project is trying to achieve. He pointed out that Goals and Objectives should be phrased so they can be clearly satisfied by the eventual alternatives.

Charlotte Behm noted that the PDT had discussed how some of the *Issues to Consider* would be covered by law, and pointed out that fewer dots by those items did not mean a lack of support, but rather acknowledgement that there would be legal protections in place regardless. Lou added that although all of the issues were important, they won’t be useful unless they help in the selection of alternatives. Jamie noted that the goal of the meeting was to develop a set of Goals and Objectives while creating an understanding of which goals will act as good selection criteria.

Lou noted the addition of the Public Involvement Plan to the meeting packet. He explained that it will change somewhat. He noted that part of the scope includes outreach to various organizations and he emphasized that they were available to present information as needed. John Barofsky asked whether June would be too late for such a presentation. Lou said it could work. Bob Kline asked whether March would work. Lou said it probably could. Lou invited CAG members to send meeting details via email. Jan Wostmann noted the 17th of May. John Barofsky noted that the Neighborhood Leadership Council meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month and includes representatives from all of the Eugene Neighborhood Associations. Several members noted that Beth Bridges produces a weekly neighborhood newsletter.

Jan Wostmann requested prepared copy for use in Neighborhood Newsletters. Lou said that there will be a project newsletter as well.

Lou noted that there will be a workshop/open house/architectural charette on Friday and Saturday for Franklin Boulevard, with another in April. Renee Benoit said that an RSVP was requested if members were planning to fully participate—though she said that drop-ins were welcome on Friday evening. Dave Carvo noted that it would be a big event for the American Institute of Architects and would bring a lot of attention to the area. Renee noted that the information being made available has been pulled from public documents. The event goes from 5:30-8:30p.m. on Friday.

Jamie encouraged the group to review the PIP and look for outreach opportunities.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

James introduced the draft Goals and Objectives in poster format on the wall. He explained that he had separated the *Recreation and Aesthetics* issue into separate *Recreation* and *Aesthetics* categories. Jamie noted that the Goals and Objectives were in no priority order.

John Barofsky asked about why the word “eliminate” had not carried from the issues posters to bullet 2B. James said that he thought it was an oversight and he didn’t recall any arguments against it. Bob Kline encouraged eliminating the bridge piers. John affirmed that he at least wants the option.

Charlotte Behm encouraged clarifying bullet 3B to include reference to the “Whilamut Natural Area of Alton Baker Park (including Eastgate Woodlands)” so as to ensure the areas covered are specific to the project and don’t extend beyond the project area into other parts of Alton Baker Park.

Tim Dodson encouraged using language under Goal 1 or Goal 5 that strives for a sustainable bridge.

Charlotte asked about the omitted references to “landmark or signature bridge” and “aesthetic treatments when viewed from below.” James explained that they were focusing on general aesthetics because “landmark” is subjective as a selection criterion. Lou pointed out that some of the concerns with aesthetics were summarized in the aesthetics goal, but he noted that they could be listed as separate objectives for emphasis. Ann Sanders noted that the PDT had discussed what a “landmark” or “signature” bridge might involve and determined that fitting with the community was more important. Charlotte encouraged adding separate objectives seeking a signature bridge with treatments for the view from the underside. She noted that the current bridge is ugly from the underside and she advocated a bridge that is “award-winning” and significant to the area. Philip Richardson suggested that “aesthetically pleasing” would seem to encompass the underside of the bridge. Lou said that it might be stronger if viewpoints from a distance were separated from viewpoints close in. Lou recommended making the item two different bullets. The group decided to include language specifying an aesthetically pleasing view from under the bridge.

Jan Wostmann asked about the omission of the pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks. Jamie noted that Objective 1D is intended to include that possibility. Tim Dodson pointed out that it wouldn’t be practicable to include a specific project that may or may not be illegal and that isn’t directly related to the bridge. Jamie also noted that Objective 1D does not preclude the possibility in the future. Jan asked whether the revised language was specific enough. Tim pointed out that the CAG will be providing feedback to the design team and noted that the design team also had ideas about alternate options. Jamie encouraged Rich and Jan to push for a solution. Lou added that it’s

problematic to create bridges over railroads in a pedestrian friendly way. Jan noted that such a bridge would build good will in the neighborhood.

Regarding Objective 1D, John Barofsky asked whether issues of bike connectivity also need to be listed in design and construction. James explained that they were looking to create long term solutions for bicycle and pedestrian facilities instead of temporary structures. John encouraged working with stakeholders to find the best opportunities. Tim Dodson pointed out that the purpose of the CAG was to provide the primary link to such stakeholders. John noted the importance of making meeting summaries available to the public so they have some idea of what needs to be done.

Lou Krug said that making the bike facilities consistent with a long-term solution instead of a short-term detour seemed like a construction issue. An objective was added to Goal 1: “Keep bike paths open during construction and make them more compatible with long term usage,” while keeping Objective 1D.

David Sonnichsen encouraged Jan and Rich to gather connectivity ideas. Jan said that connectivity with the path is frequently discussed with the community, though many of the suggested ideas have design issues. David also emphasized the importance of creating an aesthetically pleasing underside to the bridge for the sake of river and path traffic and he supported making it a separate objective.

Chris Ramey complimented the goals, though he asked whether a “during construction” element should be added to each Goal for clarification. He also pointed out that facilitating the removal or replacement of the new bridge at the end of its useful life is an issue of sustainability. John Barofsky also felt that such an objective would be important. Chris suggested including references to recycling and renewable materials. As an example, he suggested designing the bridge in such a way that the deck could be replaced without having to replace the entire structure. Jamie charged James with creating some sample language to that effect.

Lou recommended moving the new Objective about keeping bike paths open during construction from Goal 1 to Goal 5. Ann Sanders asked whether it mattered which goal each objective was listed under. Tim Dodson said it did not, as the individual objectives will be weighted relative to all the others when criteria are ultimately developed from the goals and objectives.

James proposed loose language for a sustainability objective: “*Use materials and construction techniques to design a structure that can be easily maintained and sequentially replaced as needed to extend the lifespan of the structure.*” Ann Sanders suggested adding “materials, techniques, and design” to the idea of sustaining the structure. Jamie pointed out that “signature” and “landmark” designations could also result from efforts towards sustainability

Jamie invited the members to add comments during the break.

Chris Raimy added another sustainability objective: “*Consider different lifespans for different bridge components [e.g. longest lifespans for elements in riparian areas / river, shorter for decks.]*” Tim Dodson noted that the goal would be to create a substructure that never needs to be replaced, and suggested adding: “*Longest possible life for bridge substructure.*”

Philip Richardson suggested adding “aesthetically pleasing” to the Goal 4 language and suggested that a committee might be necessary for deciding what that should mean. Jamie pointed out that

the CAG is largely responsible for such discussions. Chris Ramey suggested that the group select viewpoints from which aesthetics are important. Tim Dodson said they were already planning on it. Chris also noted that visual preference surveys might serve as a tool for narrowing down options.

Jamie noted that the goals and objectives sheets will go to the PDT for their comments.

David Sonnichsen asked what the exact project area was. Ann Sanders described the area on the aerial photographs. James said that they could bring a smaller map highlighting the area, but noted that it could vary depending on the extent of NEPA protected resources. He noted that traditionally the project area is fairly narrow: 1,000 feet from the bridge terminal on both ends and 500 feet to either side.

Presentation:

Lou said that the bridge presentation had been shown at the last PDT meeting and was intended to provide some information and background on bridge terminology and bridge types to serve as tools for future discussions. Lou then summarized the project purpose and need and listed some of the early priorities for the bridge design.

Lou listed the five basic bridge types being considered in the order of escalating complexity and cost: girder, box girder, arch, cable stayed, and suspension.

He noted that the simplest and lowest cost type of bridge is a pre-cast concrete girder structure. He noted that piers can come in different shapes and include multiple spans. He noted that for the purposes of this conversation, “bents” and “piers” will refer roughly to the same thing. He noted steel plate girders as another variation and noted that they would be rendering computer images of the different options from different views. Lou described “haunched” girders as narrower in the center than at the piers. Though not considered arch bridges, haunched girders do allow for longer spans and can be more pleasing to the eye.

Dave Carvo noted that the proposed width of the new bridge could be an issue. Lou explained that the width for each direction would be about 68 feet in each direction, including three lanes. He also suggested the possibility of creating two side-by-side structures instead a single wide bridge. Tim Dodson explained that there had been a lot of back and forth with FHWA because they wanted the bridge to accommodate four lanes. The compromise was to include three 12 foot lanes, 12 feet of shoulder, and 2 feet for bridge rails. The current detour structure is about 100 feet wide, so the new structure will be a third again as wide. Jamie noted that all of the concepts that Lou presents are feasible with the expanded width. Tim added that there are advantages to using two separate bridges, such as sunlight and the ability to divert traffic during construction.

Lou explained that steel box bridges, like the current detour bridge, have flat bottoms. He noted that they could also be made of concrete. Lou used the Folsom Bridge as an example of a box girder structure that includes decorative arches that serve no structural purpose yet make a standard bridge type distinctive. Lou added that there will be opportunities to light the underside of the bridge, though he noted constraints because of the interstate nature of the bridge. Charlotte Behm pointed out that the extrusion points on the Folsom structure change the character of the bridge. Dave Carvo said that he could visualize kids climbing onto the decorative arch.

Lou showed an example of a bridge that featured a distinctive arched middle span with simpler approach spans. He noted that arch bridges could span the whole river, and could be designed using a “through arch” where the deck passes through the arch or a “deck arch” where the deck rests on top. He said that cable stayed bridges allow for long and high spans, but are expensive.

“Extradosed” bridges combine box girders with cable stays and use shorter towers. Such bridges can’t accommodate the same spans as cable stayed varieties. He noted that there are currently no extradosed bridges in the US. He noted that unlike simpler structures, extradosed bridges can create architectural features above the bridge deck. He added that there are various inexpensive treatments such as staining, coloring, and edging that can also enhance simpler structures.

Lou noted the possibility of using a computer program to look at bridge concepts from different perspectives and show them in their environmental context. Lou said that they could draw almost anything imaginable. Lou noted several viewpoints that are particularly distinctive, either directly underneath the bridge, or from a distance. He noted that the pedestrian bridge might be too close to get a good sense of the bridge, so it might be preferable to view it from further west.

John Barofsky noted that when moving down the river, the bridge is visible for about 45 minutes along the course of the river.

Lou asked whether there were any good viewpoints from Franklin. Dave Carvo noted that the area to the east would be redeveloped and the roads would be aligned with view-corridors. Tim Dodson encouraged the group to think about viewpoints in preparation for the next meeting.

NEXT STEPS

Jamie summarized upcoming meeting topics, including: finalizing the goals and objectives, discussing evaluation criteria, discussing bridge options, and identifying viewpoints. Lou said that he would be issuing a report before the next meeting on which types of bridges were considered appropriate.

John Barofsky reiterated his request for copies of the PDT summaries. Jamie said that they would be sent out and the summary from the first CAG meeting will be posted on the web.

Lou also reminded the group to send in requests for project presentations early.

David Sonnichsen said that he had written a blurb for the neighborhood paper. Tim Dodson suggested sending a copy to Joe Harwood.