

Summary – Meeting #8

Community Advisory Group – I-5 Willamette River Bridge Project

*January 22, 2008, 10:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Singer Room, Eugene Public Library (100 West 10th Ave.)*

ATTENDANCE

CAG Members

- John Barofsky – Co-Chair, Fairmount Neighbors
- Charlotte Behm – Representative, Springfield Neighborhood (and member, CPC for Whilamut Natural Area)
- Dave Carvo – Vice Chair, Glenwood Neighborhood Group
- Pat French – Planner and CPC Representative, Willamalane Park & Recreation District
- Rich Hazel – Co-Chair, Laurel Hill Valley Citizens Association
- David Sonnichsen – Chair, CPC for Whilamut Natural Area
- Trevor Taylor – Natural Resources Supervisor, Eugene Parks and Open Space Division

Resource Team

- Ann Sanders – ODOT Project Leader/Area Representative for Lane County, ODOT Region 2
- 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

- Chris Henry – City of Eugene
- Charles Biggs – Alternate, CPC for Whilamut Natural Area
- Anthony Boesen – FHWA, Project Development Team (replacing Phil Taylor)
- Craig Milliken – HDR
- Tom Spiker – Engineer, Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners
- Lynn Iaquina – ODOT
- Anne Siegenthaller – Landscape Architect, Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners
- Jim Cox – ODOT NEPA Coordinator, Project Development Team

Handouts

- Agenda
- DRAFT Summary of CAG Meeting #7

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Jamie welcomed the group and led brief introductions. New faces included: Craig Milliken, a noise specialist from HDR; Lynn Iaquina from OBDP who will help lead the project through procurement; Anthony Boesen from FHWA who will be replacing Phil Taylor; and Tom Spiker from OBDP. Jamie noted that Tim Dodson is on vacation and Lou Krug is ill.

The meeting will focus on discussion of the EA. Jamie confirmed that members had received a copy of the EA. John Barofsky said he had not. Jamie noted that hardcopies and CDs were available.

Rich Hazel noted that some pages were missing from the CD. James noted that the missing pages would be discussed later in the meeting.

Charles Biggs asked whether it was possible provide electronic comments directly on the EA PDF. Some suggestions were made regarding the latest version of Adobe Reader that allows comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Summary of Meeting #7 Summary – David Sonnichsen pointed out that he had noted the presence of OBEC employees at the November meeting, but the discussion surrounding their attendance was not in the summary. Kalin said that the conversation had been captured but omitted because of a suggestion from Tim that the discussion of the A&E procurement process be condensed. Kalin offered to include the text in a revised summary. Lynn noted that employees of candidate firms are allowed to attend as members of the public, but not to push their own ideas. David noted that both Gary Rayor and Pam Pulliam employed by OBEC and it should be on record that they were in attendance.

Rich Hazel noted that the summary had not been made available until nearly two months after the meeting. He requested that future summaries be made available in a timelier manner.

The CAG accepted the summary pending the re-addition of text regarding the visitors from OBEC.

PROJECT UPDATE

Finalizing the EA, Distribution of the EA – James noted that the EA had been finalized and approved for production on January 8. CDs were mailed along with a letter explaining how to submit comments. The comment period will be open until February 19, with the public hearing occurring on January 31. The EA is also available on the ODOT Region 2 website and there will be advertisements and press releases in the media noting the EA's availability. The original expectation was to publish the EA on December 18, but this date was delayed three weeks due to final changes before approval by FHWA. The overall schedule has not been affected by the delayed publication.

Update on A&E Selection – Jim Cox explained that proposals from three firms were being evaluated and interviews are set for next week. Four of the five firms were invited to propose and one declined. The remaining firms include OBEC and T.Y. Lin, DEA, and FIGG. The selection will be made next week, and the decision will be made public the week after that. Lynn noted that the finished proposal document for the CM/GC firm will be released at the end of the week. Proposals will be due around the end of February. Charlotte asked whether it was possible for non-selected A&E firms to propose for CM/GC. Lynn said that firms shortlisted for the A&E selection would not be allowed to pursue the CM/GC portion because of a desire to use two separate firms.

Dave Carvo asked whether any preference was granted to in-state firms. Lynn noted that while procurement laws do not allow for discrimination based on location, the requirement to use in-state resources is a part of the proposal. Dave noted that the construction of the detour bridge involved

out of state contractors and labor and expressed concern about a lack of commitment towards hiring Oregon workers. Lynn acknowledged that trying to keep money local is a goal, although large bridge construction can be challenging for in-state firms alone and 30% of the work is required to be subcontracted out. Lynn noted that the procurement is different because of additional federal rules. However, because of the CM/GC process, the owner will have more say about approval of the work plans and a commitment towards Oregon workers will be kept in mind.

Trevor asked about the steps after the selection of a contractor. Lynn explained that negotiations will begin after a one week protest period and will hopefully conclude within two months. This schedule is consistent with the current timeline. If agreement cannot be reached with the selected firm, another firm could be selected. February 14, will be the official selection date though a protest could draw out the selection.

EA DISCUSSION

James provided background to the EA, noting that it fulfills NEPA requirements regarding the disclosure of alternatives, mitigation measures, the implications of an action, and allows for public comment. The lead agency is FHWA with US Army Corps of Engineers and the National Parks Service as cooperating agencies. The EA serves as a vehicle for informing the public about the process and developed alternatives. Comments will help FHWA and ODOT determine the interests of the public and government agencies.

This is the only bridge in the OTIA III program for which an EA is being completed. This is due to scope, size, cost, and a high level of public interest in the project. The project is designed to meet OTIA III standards and comply with programmatic permits. The program also includes the Context Sensitive Sustainable Solutions (CS³) program which promotes the use of local labor and suppliers.

The basis of the technical information within the EA comes from a series of technical studies that concluded in summer 2007. The information in the EA is distilled for public consumption. Charles Biggs asked whether the original tech reports are available to the public. James said that they would be made available in hardcopy upon request. Jim Cox explained that libraries don't typically receive hard copies of the actual reports as they include a substantial volume of information. After some discussion, the committee requested that the information be made available on CD at libraries. James said that he would follow-up on making the CDs available with the library copies of the EA.

James explained that an administrative draft of the EA was prepared and then issued to a study committee for review. Several hundred comments were received and revisions were made. The final review of the process was conducted with FHWA before approval on January 8.

The alternatives chapter of the EA describes the transition from the problem statement to the solution. The build alternative only defines a "box" around what the bridge forms could be. James noted that the alignment would remove the portion of fill between the canoe canal and the Willamette River that was added during construction of the detour bridge and would return to the original ODOT right of way. The concept pier configurations attempt to place as few piers in the river as possible.

Pat French noted that pier configuration B places the southern pier in the millrace area which SHPO considers to be historic. James explained that the millrace is in a ruined condition and SHPO feels

that the placement of a pier there would not affect the integrity of the historic property because of the impacts from the existing bridge and the lack of an interpretive explanation of the millrace site.

Trevor Taylor noted that the original millrace was gravity fed and asked whether it would be possible to restore a gravity fed millrace if that was desired at some point in the future. James said it was hard to say although it appeared feasible. Tom Spiker noted that there would be some impact to the millrace outcropping in both configurations A and B.

Charles asked whether either pier configuration poses conflicts with the trails. James noted that configuration A would be closer to the trail on the north shore. Dave Carvo asked whether configuration A would eliminate the possibility of creating a path to the north of Franklin Blvd. on the south shore. James said that the possibility was not addressed as part of the analysis. Pat suggested that the pier itself could be used as a resource for suspending a bike path where it could not have been placed before. James agreed that configuration B would provide more room for the addition of a path. Dave noted that access from Glenwood to the University is an important issue. Chris Henry noted that placing a path in that location would be difficult because of grade and engineering challenges regardless of the presence of a pier. Lynn said that she felt the pier placement wouldn't necessarily eliminate the option for a path and offered to build in the suggestion when negotiating the A&E scope of work. Dave noted the long term goal of creating a connection that doesn't require crossing Franklin Blvd.

James described the four potential bridge types. The through arch is now thought to be a viable possibility because of revised cost figures. The through arch would be approximately six feet wider on the side of each span and would affect the footing size. The through arch would be able to cross Franklin with pier configuration B. Dave Carvo asked whether the through arch presented a substantial difference in terms of impact. Jim said that the impact to the river increases from 0.25 acres to 0.3 acres under a worst-case-scenario. The actual impact could be smaller. The deck width will remain the same though there will be more material above ground. The effective impact would still be less than that of the existing structures.

James noted that temporary impacts will occur over the four year construction period. John Barofsky asked how right of way for river users would be mitigated and how river users would be kept safe. James said that while they haven't addressed the needs of recreational users in terms of mitigating right of way, there has been discussion with police about coordinating safe passage for river users. Such coordination is addressed in the section on land use. David Sonnichsen reiterated John's concern, particularly with regard to work bridges. He noted challenges to river users during the construction of the detour bridge and expressed concern about the work bridges becoming debris dams in the winter.

Charlotte Behm noted that the lighting used during construction of the temporary bridges was excessive and resulted in excess light in the park even during non-working hours. James noted that these specific comments were particularly helpful. He noted that a certain level of nighttime work was assumed, and standard working time restrictions were outlined.

Charles asked about providing access for ODFW to stock the canoe canal. James said that the issue hadn't come up and they were not anticipating any in-water work in canoe canal, but he would look into it.

James explained that the ODFW timeframe for in-water work lasts from June 1, through October 31. Work will involve removing the existing piers and building new ones. Conservative assumptions have been made about staging in the park area. Ideally, the areas used during construction would be contained within the existing right of way or as close to it as possible. There will be some staging and storage impacts outside of the existing right of way and these are shown in the right of way technical report. Removing fill from the park would require walls on the fill slope near the roadway and the through arch would require more walls because of the extra width.

Charlotte encouraged that the new wall be adequately maintained and should not create a space where trash can collect. James suggested that landscape and maintenance issues will be included in the design phase. Discussions of landscape modifications to the path and canoe canal have been more directly pertinent to the mitigation to the park.

Charles suggested that excess fill be reused within the park or concurrent with other restoration efforts. James noted that there is currently a net removal of fill. Lynn indicated that unless there is a specific use for it, it will be removed. The committee briefly discussed possible uses for the fill.

James noted several errors in the document, including missing figures from Appendix B. Jim added that some copies of the EA hardcopies were missing pages 53-54. James explained that revisions would be made to incorporate those corrections and public comments.

There had also been a reanalysis of noise impacts because of some errors in how the data from the receivers was used. James explained that the EA looks at 2030 traffic volumes and the number of affected residences for the build and no-build alternatives. James noted that the number of impacted residential properties ends up being higher because a row of homes near the northeast portion of the project had been incorrectly identified as single family homes when they are actually duplexes.

John Barofsky asked whether the figures include projected homes. Craig Milliken said that only currently permitted homes are included. Noise mitigation for future development will be the responsibility of developers.

Jim explained that the use of soundwalls is considered based on the amount of potential noise reduction. This must be at least 5db and is preferably 7-8db. The revised information about the higher number of residences improved the cost effectiveness of building the walls.

Rich asked whether the use of soundwalls was the only noise mitigation measure being considered. Craig said it was, as other options such as moving the bridge or restricting freight was not compatible with the goals of the project. ODOT does not have an approved pavement type for noise reduction. Charlotte asked whether railing type makes a difference. Craig said it does not make a significant difference to use standard 2-3 ft jersey barriers or the tubular rail that creates views, primarily because barriers of that height are not particularly effective at blocking noise from the tallest and loudest vehicles.

Rich asked about the noise measurement area. Craig said the measurements were taken from within the limits of the project area, though the noise model anticipates impacts beyond.

Charles asked whether there is a way to alter the soundwall design to offer more visual interest. Craig noted that the priority is to get the wall close to the source of the noise or the receiver and

ODOT priority is to remain within the existing right of way. Lynn noted that the use of patterns and textures on the walls will be an aesthetic consideration. Craig noted that the south wall will vary in height while the northern wall will be more level. Jamie noted that they would try to create a display that shows a cross section of how the noise walls would be applied in the area. Rich noted the visual impact to residences below the level of the ramps. Craig noted that if the majority of property owners don't want a wall, ODOT won't force one. Jamie asked whether property owners can be involved in the design. Craig said that it depends on the project. Jim noted that not much can be done to a concrete noise wall and that features like Plexiglas windows are not standard and expensive to maintain. Ann cautioned that the noise walls are currently a recommendation and not a commitment and it is possible, though unlikely, that they might be dropped at some point.

Rich asked whether the noise model takes into account irregular noise generation from exhaust brakes. Craig said it does not. The model is based on a Federal standard based on hourly average noise levels. John Barofksy asked whether signs banning exhaust brakes could be a mitigation technique. Ann noted that the use of signage is restricted and specifying an exhaust brake restriction within the EA is not allowed. Rich suggested that a warning regarding unlawful engine breaking could create a climate of compliance akin to that within a safety corridor that would lead truckers to be less likely to use loud braking.

James recalled the possibility of including river traffic in the transportation mitigation section. Ann asked about short term pathway closures. James said that the intention is to keep routes through the ODOT right of way open during construction and proactively address detours to keep them safe.

James noted how visual simulations were used to score the before and after views of the bridge. Charles asked whether it was possible to create a flyover animation for each type. James said that alternate views were possible, but the challenge is in incorporating background images and working within the limitations of the contract. He noted that the existing viewpoints were developed with the help of the CAG. James noted that non-structural above deck elements are still a possibility and that the rails depicted in the renderings are the standard rails that were used for the noise analysis.

John Barofsky asked whether the EA will serve as a tool that the community can use as a policing mechanism to keep mitigation efforts and the contractor in check. James said that the Revised EA will include specific mitigation requirements that will be given the force of law. Jim noted that the EA is an obligation to ODOT to include mitigation measures in the contract. James explained that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), if appropriate, is the document that would impose mitigation constraints on the project. The CAG will make a recommendation on the preferred option in April.

Charles asked about the "pass" being granted for stormwater permits. Jim explained that some permits are currently available on a general level while others will require more design and will be available later in the process. James noted that a preconstruction assessment will be prepared that demonstrates how the design of the project meets environmental performance standards. James emphasized that they have prepared for a worst case scenario. Charles noted that the detour bridge does not treat runoff. James agreed, noting that a new bridge would cover three more acres, but would treat discharged runoff. A table that shows improved conditions with the new bridge will be made available at the open house.

Chris Henry pointed out that the newsletter and website do not currently list the mailing address for comments on the EA. Kalin offered to post the address on the website.

Charles asked where the EA addresses the specifics of removing the existing bridges. James said that some elements would be left up to the contractor, but offered to review the section.

REVIEW PUBLIC HEARINGS MATERIALS

Hearing date Thursday January 31, 2008 – Jamie invited the CAG to the hearing and noted the proposed stations:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1) Continuous play PowerPoint</p> <p>2) Sign in/Sign up for testimony</p> <p>3) Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goals and Objectives• Timeline/Next Steps• Vicinity Maps• CAG-PDT <p>4) EA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process steps• Alternatives - Pier A or B; No build• Impacts/mitigation table <p>5) Noise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General decibel info• General soundwall effectiveness• Locations, cross sections | <p>6) Visual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bridge Types <p>7) Transportation</p> <p>8) Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Park• River <p>9) Comment area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written• CAG comments• Input to date – Community considerations• Court Reporter• Laptop Station – Tech reports |
|---|---|

Charles asked for clarification on the meeting format. Jamie explained that there will not be a formal presentation; rather, people will be able to drop in and submit written comments or oral testimony as they choose.

David Sonnichsen asked how attendees would be guided in their comments. Jamie noted language in the most recent email to the CAG that gives guidance on how comments on the EA should be structured to be as helpful as possible.

John asked when the press release would be issued. Jamie said it is pending information about the post-EA period that will not be available until after a meeting with OBDP on January 23.

Charles asked about meeting accessibility for the visually disabled. James noted that they are required to make information available in ADA compliant forms. Jamie offered to follow up.

Jamie said that the CAG's comments from the meeting would be confirmed by email and then presented at the public hearing as examples for the public.

Kalin showed several examples of how photo morphing would be used to illustrate how no specific bridge designs have been selected. Charlotte reiterated that she would like to see example renderings of above deck features to provide contrast to the through arch.

NEXT MEETING

March 11, 2008 10-1pm – Jamie discussed the next steps for the CAG:

Come to the hearing!

Provide written comments by 2/19/2008.

Next CAG meeting March 11, 2008:

- Review/discuss comments on the EA and how to address them
- Begin transition to design phase
- Identify additional members
- Discuss public process steps

David Sonnichsen asked when Edelman was scheduled to take over management of public involvement for the project. Jamie said it would likely be at the beginning of the summer.

CLOSE

CAG Input on the EA recorded during the meeting:

- Use local labor!
- Highlight the tradeoff/opportunity associated with Pier configuration A and a bike/ped connection along river. Important issue for Glenwood NA.
- Put a CD of the tech reports in the EA hard copy at libraries.
- Show the right of way impacts to river users – “will the river be continuously open for travel” – include canoe canal. Work bridges are a real concern for river users - previous experience was not good. Concern that work bridges could be debris dams if left in place more than one season.
- Concerns about excessive lighting work area at night – especially when there was no one there.
- Ensure that maintenance, landscaping, etc. are included as part of the discussion about the structural walls (where fill is removed)
- Opportunity to address the blind curves on the current bike path, especially under freeway at canoe canal, removing fill to straighten path and under Walnut Street Bridge.
- Opportunity to use fill removed for other purposes in the park – use on site or for other community needs first, rather than paying contractors to haul away.
- Include what other options were reviewed to reduce noise and why they were not recommended – moving the alignment, for example. Include cross section of noise walls to give people an idea of what the wall could look like; property owner input; elaborate on the difference between “required” and “recommended.”
- Want to make sure the mitigation section reflects a level of detail that allows the community to use the document as a tool for compliance.
- Include more about the bridge removal process.
- Is there a list of agreements (MOU’s, etc.) with local jurisdictions – list this out.