

## I-5 Willamette River Bridge EA SUMMARY OF OPEN HOUSE – JANUARY 31, 2008

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### OVERVIEW

A public open house for the I-5 Willamette River Bridge EA Project was held on Thursday, January 31, 2008 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Eugene Public Library, and from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Springfield City Hall. The purpose of the open house was to provide the public with information and comment opportunities on the Environmental Assessment.

### ATTENDANCE

Members of the project team attending the meeting included:

- Ann Sanders, Project Leader (ODOT)
- Tim Dodson, (ODOT)
- Jim Cox (ODOT)
- Lynn Iaquina (OBDP)
- James Gregory (HDR)
- Craig Milliken (HDR)
- Jamie Damon, Public Involvement Coordinator (Jeanne Lawson Associates)
- Kalin Schmoltdt, Public Involvement Assistant (Jeanne Lawson Associates)

The sign-in sheets recorded 32 meeting attendees, including nine at the Springfield session and 23 at the Eugene session. Approximately 10 other individuals attended but did not sign in.

### NOTIFICATION AND PUBLICITY

The meeting was advertised by the following methods:

- A four-page color newsletter was mailed to approximately 500 agencies, organizations, and individuals on the interested parties list.
- Newspaper display ads were published in *The Eugene Register-Guard* on 1/25/2008 and 1/31/2008.
- A notice was published in the Community Briefs section of *The Register-Guard* on 1/30/2008.
- A press release was issued on 1/29/2008.

### MEETING FORMAT

The format of the open house was drop-in style, with no formal presentation. Several stations were set up around the room (listed below). Project team members were available throughout the meeting to explain the display boards and answer questions. A court reporter was available to hear oral testimony on the EA.

## Displays

1. **Sign-in Table** – including a sign in sheet and continuous play PowerPoint slideshow that presented a project overview and background on the contents of the EA.
2. **Project Introduction** – a series of displays outlined the project Goals and Objectives, project timeline, and various vicinity maps.
3. **Environmental Assessment** – including displays of the project process chart, pier and bridge type alternatives considered in the EA, and an impacts/mitigation table. A laptop station with the EA technical reports was also available.
4. **Noise** – included displays with general decibel information, illustrations of soundwall effectiveness, and project specific soundwall information upon request.
5. **Comment Area** – included space for attendees to provide written comments as well as oral testimony to an ODOT representative stationed with a court reporter. Also posted was recent guidance from the CAG and community input from previous public meetings.

## Available Handouts

- Comment Form
- Newsletters (1, 2, & 3)
- EA Impacts Mitigation Matrix
- Open House Summaries (1 & 2)
- Project Purpose and Need/Goals and Objectives Information

## **COMMENTS**

A total of 13 comment forms were submitted (as of 2/19/2008). Full comments are included below.

The most common theme involved support for the visual aesthetics of an arch type bridge, though several comments expressed hope that the bridge would be simple and easy to maintain.

A number of comments expressed support for use of the areas under and around the bridge. Several expressed support for developing a mountain bike “skills course” beneath the bridge.

In terms of design, respondents requested interesting above deck features, minimizing visual barriers for through travelers and residents, the use of color and dramatic lighting, and incorporating historical elements into the design that mirror other nearby bridges on the Willamette River. Respondents also emphasized the importance of noise protection, providing detours for paths, and consideration of environmental impacts.

## FULL COMMENTS

- My thought is to keep it simple. I don't support the "No Build" but my preference would be to avoid the "frills". Archways to me are overdoing it. There are probably 100 people who go over this bridge for every person who goes under it.
- I prefer either deck arch or through arch and don't like the others.
- Of the bridge type options shown, I prefer the through arch type. It has a real "bridge presence". The others just look like highways crossing a river. I'd like to see some color and a dramatic lighting component.
- Environmental – Note that the seed planted under the temp bridge never established.
- I like the through arch design for the bridge. It reminds me of the Peter DeFazio bridge in Alton Baker Park – one of my favorites!
- Interested and welcome the opportunity to further explore potential optional uses of ODOT/I-5 right of way land *under* and around bridge, particularly for mountain bike "skills and challenge" park. We look forward to further exploring this opportunity.
- I like the "through arch bridge type".
- The LCMBA represents the mountain bike (MTB) community in Eugene. Specifically we focus on advocacy and working with land managers to provide more MTB access and opportunities. One of the main goals of the LCMBA is the creation of an urban MTB skills park. The I-5 bridge project provides an opportunity for incorporating the skills park as part of the plan. A skills park provides many positive benefits to the community and further enhances the showcasing of the bridge. Please see the email I sent on Jan.31 to both ODOT and the consulting firm's project managers and public liaison persons. Thank you for considering this option!
- I propose that the replacement bridge be built in the most cost effective manner feasible. The "girder style" appears to be easier for long term maintenance, minimum nuisances (birds, etc.) and yet be aesthetically pleasing. I emphasize cost concerns because of the increasing competition for scarce transportation and public dollars available.
- I like the "through arch" design the best. If we're spending big bucks on a new bridge, let's make it look good! Stay in contact with the LCMBA on a potential mountain bike challenge and skills park on the south side of the bridge. (Area II) This would be a great way to turn a "negative space" into a positive community asset. Thanks!
- The Willamette River Bridge is an important gateway to Eugene/Springfield and the southern end of the Willamette Valley. The bridge design should be a visible marker for drivers on I-5 and those crossing along Franklin Blvd. I support designs that include an arch, pylon or marker visible above the bridge deck. The through arch most closely appears to do this. I am opposed to large sound walls which are visual barriers. They are really ugly. Thanks for the chance to comment.

- For visual impact, could it be considered to bring a historical look to the above part of the bridge? Try to copy the above deck green girders like the Ferry Street and Springfield bridges. The city of Eugene overwhelmingly wanted to keep the Ferry Street Bridge as is. It would be easier to light the bridge that way using the feature above the deck. The green girder bridges are rare today. Please build a set of twins over the Willamette for I-5. Do whatever they want for the lower portion, (deck and below). The other green girder bridges also have three piers.
- Best design for vehicles above and boats, bikes, hikers, walkers below is the “Through Arch Bridge”; best design of the three less expensive options is the “I Girder Bridge”.
- Consider the park, river and path usage that occurs below the bridge. A design that is pleasing and not distracting from the surrounding landscape. I prefer the “Box Girder” – clean and simple.
- Will paths have detours for bike and pedestrian travel between Eugene and Springfield? This is a heavy use area for recreation and commuting. Noise issues for surrounding community should be a priority when considering design and placement.
- I like the 2-bridge (one each direction) plan and the potential designs are attractive. My main comment on design is that view is important. It’s so beautiful in Oregon – please leave the view from cars as unobstructed as possible. It’s discouraging to cross a bridge and have a wall block the view.