

# Summary – CAG#16/PDT#15

## Community Advisory Group / Project Development Team I-5 Willamette River Bridge Project

*November 20, 2008, 11:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.*

*McLane Conference Room, Springfield ODOT Offices (644 A Street)*

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### ATTENDANCE

#### CAG Members

- Charlotte Behm – Representative, Springfield Neighborhood (and member, CPC for Whilamut Natural Area)
- Dave Carvo – Glenwood Neighborhood Group
- Eric Gunderson – Former President, American Institute of Architects SWO Chapter
- Bob Kline – Chair, Harlow Neighbors
- Greg Hyde – Willamalane Parks & Recreation District
- Phillip Richardson – Eugene Parks and Open Space Division
- David Sonnichsen – CPC for Whilamut Natural Area
- Scott Wylie – Springfield Resident

#### Resource Team

- Dick Upton – ODOT Project Manager, Bridge Delivery Unit
- Carl Deaton – ODOT Region 2, Designer
- Jamie Damon – Public Involvement Manager, JLA
- Kalin Schmoldt – Public Involvement Coordinator, JLA

#### PDT Members

- Don Angermayer – ODOT District 5 Program Coordinator
- Tom Boyatt – City of Springfield
- Molly Cary – ODOT Region 2, Environmental Manager
- Chris Henry – City of Eugene, Transportation Planning Engineer
- Ann Sanders – ODOT, Project Lead

#### Other Attendees

- Douglas Beauchamp – Lane Arts Council
- Megan Banks – LCOG
- John Ferguson – T.Y. Lin
- Larry Fox – OBEC
- Suzanne Roberts – OBDP
- Jiri Strasky – OBEC, Lead Bridge Designer
- Dave Winship – Winship Designs, Local artist

#### Handouts (available at meeting)

- Agenda
- DRAFT CAG/PDT meeting summary CAG#15/PDT#14

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jamie Damon explained the meeting purpose. The group will listen to Jiri Strasky's presentation on the bridge design and discuss best design practices and how to apply them. The goal of the meeting is create a common theme that helps hone the design process. Eric Gunderson and Douglas Beauchamp will also be sharing their experience with good designs in the Eugene/ Springfield area.

**Project Update** – David Sonnichsen said that he had contacted Larry Fox for a presentation addressing noise impacts during construction. There were no comments to report back to the committee. David said that a new representative, Ian Howard, would be representing the FNA on the CAG. Jamie reminded the group that the members of the project team are available to make presentations as part of the design phase.

Dick Upton said that KEZI is expected to come by the meeting around 12 p.m. He noted that Representative Peter DeFazio's office has taken interest in the project.

Dave Carvo asked whether the EA is officially complete. Dick said that all materials were submitted to FHWA on Monday and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is expected any day.

### **UPDATE ON DESIGN**

Larry Fox reviewed information from the previous meeting with regard to undecided elements of the project that are still open to public input. He introduced Jiri Strasky as the lead bridge designer and the creative force behind the design to date.

Larry reminded the group that it will be necessary to submit land use permit applications within the next few months in order to facilitate the start of early work by summer 2009. The early work is necessary in order to complete the project within the 2012 deadline for the OTIA III program. Early work will involve building work bridges, a containment structure, and demolishing the existing bridges. The CM/GC model allows early work packages to begin prior to the completion of the design. The schedule has been modified to extend the design discussion to the end of 2009.

Larry explained that the bridge theme could be a series of words and need not be defined by a specific named style. Much of the theme has already been developed from the efforts to create the project goals. The web based survey also produced descriptive words like *graceful*, *distinctive*, *memorable*, *curves*, and *unique* as well as values such as *ease of maintenance*, *sustainability*, *longevity*, *a sense of gateway*, *unique character*, and *safety*. Jamie noted that the options on the survey were informed by discussions with the CAG and the PDT and that the public values and descriptive words strongly mirrored those of the committees.

The goals and values have already manifested themselves in a number of ways in the current design. The arch type incorporates curves and the cast-in-place concrete structure has minimal joints and no bearings which reduces maintenance. The bridge uses slender members and eliminates cross bracing to create a modern and unique structure that echoes other bridges in Oregon. The aesthetics of the underside view have been optimized for public space, with narrow spandrel columns used to create a unique appearance, improve views, and reduce maintenance needs.

The current design is constrained by factors such as the findings in the EA, utilities, safety for river travelers, impacts to the mill race, and the locations of the existing bridges. Considerations for a potential expansion of Franklin Blvd. to 7-lanes required that the bridge be higher. The railroad tracks and I-5 on/off ramps were also constraints. The physical constraints also led to structural requirements regarding the number, size, and location of arch ribs, spandrel columns, and approach piers and girders. Deck overhang is also constrained in order to preserve continuity.

Remaining design opportunities include above deck features and gateway elements such as pylons. Bridge railing can also tie into the gateway structure. There has been interest in using open railing

that allows views of the river, though ODOT currently has only one such type of railing in common use. Larry offered to look for other options that ODOT may approve of.

Tom Boyatt asked about the use of screens with salmon decorations in the Columbia River Gorge. Molly Carey said that the screens do meet ODOT standards. Don Angermeyer said that the screens likely included solid rail as well. Larry said that solid rail and fence would be required over the railway section of the bridge and that it could be possible to decorate the fence in some way.

Larry noted other remaining options for design input. The Canoe Canal underpass presents design opportunities for the wall configuration, path alignment, slope paving, and fencing. Park improvements will be open to public input though detailed discussions have not yet begun. There are also opportunities for lighting the bridge though it may be a challenge to balance the desire for visual interest, improved path safety, and the needs of the natural area. Various noise and retaining walls will be necessary in order to remain within the existing right of way and those walls will present further opportunities for texture, stain, and art. Tom Boyatt noted the use of concrete forms in the Columbia Gorge to mimic natural stone. Dave Carvo noted the use of similar forms in Bend.

Scott Wylie asked whether artistic opportunities on the walls would be constrained by immediate permitting needs. Larry said that the permits do not require the details of such treatments.

Larry noted that stain was preferable to colored concrete because achieving uniform color for a large structure is difficult. Tom Boyatt noted that non-uniform color can look more natural under some circumstances. Tom asked how long stain typically lasts. Dave Carvo said that in his experience, stain does fade over time, but tends to look consistent.

Larry said that decisions classified as “immediate” would be needed by early December and would involve input from the CAG. The team will present options on the shape of spandrel columns, approach piers and arch column footings. Other immediate decisions involve stormwater remediation, restoring the Glenwood Slough, and temporary park improvements such as path realignments and detours. A sense of the aesthetic theme will also be needed soon. Greg Hyde clarified whether the “temporary” improvements would actually be the first phase of subsequent improvements. Larry agreed that some of the improvements would be further modified to reach their final form.

Dave Carvo asked for more detail on the restoration of the Glenwood Slough. Larry said that the concrete channel would be removed and the culverts would be sealed. Fish passable step-pools would be added to the railroad embankment. Negotiations are currently underway with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding details. Tom Boyatt asked how the restoration would affect the bike paths. Larry said that the bike path would be shifted north onto a bench on the Franklin fill under the bridge. A new pathway bridge will be added over the restored Glenwood Slough using beams from the detour bridge. The location presents an opportunity to add an interpretive plaza for the mill race that would help satisfy SHPO requirements. Tom expressed concern about crossing Franklin Blvd. at Jenkins Drive. Larry said that the second phase of the path improvements could include a bike path from the east side of the bridge extending to the edge of the project right of way.

Greg Hyde asked for more details on the interpretive plaza. Larry said that the plaza would be between the river and Franklin. The potential location is within the floodway so there are still some questions about the use of fill.

Larry explained that “early” decisions will involve gateway features, retaining walls, rails, soundwalls, lighting considerations, surface treatments, bridge security, and the Canoe Canal underpass.

Dave Carvo asked how climbable the arches are expected to be. Larry said that ODOT will need to clarify what their concerns are with regard to bridge security. He said that the arch ribs would not be so steep that they would stop someone who is determined to climb them, but he noted the need to establish due diligence while being mindful of the bridge aesthetics.

“Later” decisions (Nov. 2009) will include permanent (phase two) park improvements such as landscaping, signage, and park amenities like benches and art. Concrete color, slope paving, and the interpretive plaza under the Franklin Bridge will also be determined at this time. Guaranteed Maximum Price is expected in early 2010.

Ann Sanders asked whether the park improvement opportunities were firmly settled. Larry said that the decisions were firm to the extent that they were needed to apply for environmental permits. Ann asked whether Larry was confident in the permit applications. Larry said that some changes were made to make the path easier to permit, though there will be floodway fill issues to address as part of the City of Springfield’s site plan review.

Larry addressed the design and decision process, noting that the public and aesthetic stakeholder groups will feed the discussions of the CAG that will in turn inform the recommendations of the PDT. Assuming that the decisions fit within the project scope, schedule, and budget, the agency should be willing to accept those decisions.

Greg Hyde asked about future opportunities to discuss the beginning of a south bank trail extension. Larry said that the EA did not consider the trail as part of the project.

#### **AESTHETIC PRIMER/THEMATIC POSSIBILITIES AND OTHER DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

Jiri Strasky provided various examples of bridge structures, including arch-bridges of varying spans. Jiri noted bridges that unify different bridge types within the same structure and he expressed a preference for slender deck structures as he highlighted previous work on the San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge and the Mackenzie River Bridge among others.

Jiri showed diverse architectural examples of museums in Milwaukie, Bilbao, San Francisco, and Fort Worth. While the example buildings employed the unified style of the architect from beginning to end, bridge projects require a balance between the architect’s style and the desires of the public.

The Sundial Bridge in Redding, California is often cited as an impressive signature bridge, but resulted in maintenance challenges after only one year. Jiri said that a bridge must be designed to look good for a long time. Other bridges use elements that clash with each other and yield a non-uniform structure. Bridges with a consistent form tend to be beautiful if they properly integrate with their surroundings. The bridge structures should not “lie,” in that they should honestly show how the structure works, and bridges should be appropriately priced, as spending money demonstrates

priorities. Larry noted that the realization that the deck-arch was one of the lowest cost options demonstrates that it is an appropriate structure for the location.

Jiri explained that arches clearly make a statement about a bridge. Arches are the oldest type of structure and many notable Oregon bridges use repetitive arch structures with proportional and continuous arch shapes. Bridges also express the time of construction through the choice of materials and design. Jiri suggested that the basic arch cannot be improved because the primary goal of the arch is to express proportionality.

Jiri explained that his goal was to make the connection from deck to the arch as simple as possible while using a unified structure from one end to the other. The deck can be located above the arch or integrated into it. Because of the project constraints, it was necessary to integrate the arch to get the largest arch possible. Jiri explained that the span and rise of the arches were set by static rules that determine the arch shape.

Cross-bracing can distract from the views under the bridge although removing the cross bracing requires using precast deck girders to stiffen the structure. The design attempts to minimize the size of the bridge pedestals while maintaining soft lines. Two separate columns support the deck at expansion joints at the ends of the arches to allow horizontal movement. The design uses prismatic piers to appear more visually appropriate and be more seismically stable. The pier forms retain the same external shape throughout the structure to maintain a unified external appearance, though they change size to accommodate the different span types.

Scott Wylie noted the use of signage on the new bike/ped bridge over I-5 and asked whether there is a way to consider signage when thinking about the bridge design. Dick acknowledged the clash of the signage with the new pedestrian bridge structure and offered to address the issue of signage if and when it is relevant. Larry said that there is one sign in the project area that will be replaced because of the new roadway alignment. That sign will need to be replaced early in the process but no other signs will be added. Chris Henry asked whether the sign supports could emulate the bridge pier shapes. Larry said it was possible, though cost is an issue. Scott Wylie encouraged the team to be aware of operational hardware that will be added after the structure is complete so that it might be better integrated into the design early on. Molly Carey suggested adding “illumination” to the operational hardware list and Dick added approach rail. Dick offered to create a more comprehensive list.

Charlotte Behm asked for clarification on the design affecting the underside view of the bridge. Larry explained that the underside of the arch spans use transverse ribs to connect longitudinal girders that are aligned to maintain a consistent deck overhang. Beyond the arch spans, longitudinal members are needed because the span distances increase significantly and require a different structural system. It is possible to avoid the need for cross bracing because the bridge deck and transverse ribs are tied into the crown of the arch.

Scott Wylie said that he was starting to appreciate the importance of integrating the fascia along the entire structure instead of using separate styles for the arches and the haunched sections. Jiri said that he had wanted the structure to be visually and aesthetically consistent in order to emphasize how the structure works. Larry noted that it took extra effort to achieve the effect of consistency.

Dave Carvo noted that the vertical spandrel columns appeared to be set back from the edge of the arch ribs and questioned whether they provided enough room to let someone climb on the structure. Jiri said that the setback would be small, only one or two inches, and could be adjusted. Larry said that a small setback allows vermin to climb on the bridge and discourage nesting birds. Don Angermeyer asked how big the spandrel columns would be. Jiri said that the width of the columns would vary based on height, with the tallest at 2.5 feet and the shortest at 1 foot. Dave expressed concern about reducing how climbable the structure is while still preserving aesthetics.

Tom Boyatt asked for Jiri's opinions on railing. Jiri said that he preferred easily maintained railings that are simple with clean lines. The bridge should be designed for the experience of car users and should consider their high speed. In terms of maintenance, concrete is the easiest. Larry said that because of public support, the agency has already committed to using rails that allow views of the river even though such rail is not the easiest to maintain.

Scott Wylie noted the challenge of maintaining a sense of continuity between different rail types. He suggested that unifying columns could aid in the railing transition or that a harmonious contrast could be used that does not pretend to be part of the bridge.

#### **MANIFESTATION OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE COMMUNITY**

**Eric Gunderson** noted that debate about the quality of a design is healthy and he complimented Larry and Jiri for their demonstration of the constraints and showing examples of bridges that express a unified theme. He noted that while the goal of a public process is often to incorporate a variety of different ideas, this process requires that the designers be allowed to create a uniform piece of art based on their own experience.

Eric encouraged thinking about the bridge holistically, including elements outside of the bridge itself, such as the walls and approaches. He noted that the area around the bridge is compressed by the presence of Judkins Point, and he asked what words might make sense to describe the area. He suggested words like *confluence*, which applies to transportation, water, and other forces.

Eric noted the design challenges related to connecting the different span types and noted the option of using the transition points for above deck elements or using different pier types.

**Douglas Beauchamp** suggested that artists can play a role in what happens over the next four years in terms of mitigating impacts and providing feedback on pathways and noise walls. Artists can also have a role in enhancing the project by adding to the design process by noting opportunities for storytelling and education. Artists can compliment design opportunities while respecting the unity of the bridge by articulating and amplifying the bridge theme. Colors, piers, railings, screens, noise walls, and paving offer artistic opportunities but the challenge lies in remaining sensitive to the overall context of the project.

It might be possible to employ natural stone, references to the water, or *crossing* as a theme. The art should reference the theme and the elegance of the bridge itself. Artists and designers work within their perceptions of the users of the bridge and users can include drivers and passengers on I-5 and Franklin, bicyclists, pedestrians, and river and canal users. Users can also be spectators from a distance, or virtual spectators via the internet. Art will influence how people feel when they use the space and will convey a sense of the region and of this place. Indirect participants will also be able to look upon the bridge as a model for how the process works and how to involve various groups.

Douglas cited examples of his involvement in public art programs in the area, including the Eugene Library, LTD headquarters and the Gateway Center. He acknowledged Betsy Wolston for her tile work and noted the many artists represented on the U of O campus that deal with themes of stone and water. Douglas offered to make a presentation at a future meeting that showcases inspirational designs. Douglas noted that the short timeline was a concern if there is to be a thorough process for involving art. Larry noted that the additional time was already fortunate, as the original scope called for design decisions by April 2009. Jamie suggested incorporating Douglas' presentation into the December CAG meeting.

### **FOCUSED THEME DISCUSSION**

Jamie noted the need to determine what style choices should and should not be considered. Jamie listed the top words from the community survey as well as worlds mentioned by Jiri, Eric, and Douglas. She noted that the words were consistent with the group's priorities and that various decisions have already been made based on this guidance. Jamie asked whether the list of words is correct and whether the continued application of the words is sufficient as a theme.

Dave Carvo asked for clarification on how the selection of a theme will help the process. John Ferguson explained that the theme will help provide a unified vision for the different groups working on different parts of the project. The "theme" is basically the message to the user and can be a list of adjectives that describe features or it could be a list of objectives to accomplish through aesthetic treatments. Jamie noted that while the CAG has talked about values and descriptors before, it hasn't been in the context of selecting a theme. Previous conversations have dealt only with the bridge, and now the theme will also need to apply to elements such as the Canoe Canal and parks improvements as well. Bob Kline said that he felt the current design has already captured many of the listed adjectives. He suggested that further development of aesthetic themes would apply to sculpturing and embellishments above or below the bridge. Scott Wylie noted that it will be important to have a sense of what the art communicates, as art provokes thought and provides information. Having a developed sense of what the art should convey is necessary if RFPs for artwork are to be issued. He suggested examples such *two cities* and *where the valley begins/ends*, as thematic seeds of time and place.

Tom Boyatt suggested that the vagueness of the possible aesthetic and artistic treatments is holding people up. He requested a plan view illustration that shows where aesthetic and artistic treatments are anticipated and how those locations relate to each other. Tom said that he felt that the bridge is art in and of itself, and the artwork should help that focus. Larry offered to include such a drawing at the next meeting and include photographs of existing conditions. Tom said that it appeared that the artistic treatments were more applicable to the elements surrounding the bridge than the bridge itself. Larry said that those elements should still fit within the context of the whole project. He agreed with Dave that the theme to date is reflected in the current bridge design, but noted that the whole area still needs a unifying concept.

Don Angermeyer questioned whether the list contained too many similar adjectives. Larry suggested that the list would help people who are currently outside of the process to understand the parameters and mindset that the team is working with.

Douglas Beauchamp said that he was concerned about how to introduce new people to the process while still pressing forward. He said that the art needs to respond to the design as well as to what

happens at the intersection of the river and the interchange. He noted *flow* as an example theme, suggesting that it would provide overarching values that would frame not only the bridge, but also the river and users.

Bob Kline said that *diversity* springs to mind as a theme. He noted regional elements such as the ocean, flowers, trees, and agriculture. He suggested that *diversity* could mean that the user in the park has a different experience than the person overhead.

Charlotte Behm said that she didn't think the list of adjectives constituted a theme and that another level is needed to tie them together into what is being described. She said that the natural area already has the theme of *preserving a wilderness* in the middle of an urban area while the name also honors the Kalapuya. Ann Sanders agreed with Charlotte about the terms, noting that it was difficult to apply them as a guide to the design of features like retaining walls. She said that terms like "*flow*" were more helpful.

Chris Henry said that he felt that the theme was unclear but also that the simplicity and elegance of the structure speaks for itself. Chris asked whether the immediate decisions about spandrel columns would require selecting a theme right away. Larry said that immediate design decision in December would not be as affected by the selection of a theme as "early" and "later" decisions which will more directly affect the bridge and the experience of users. Larry said that the team would likely present three variations on the spandrel shape at the next meeting and ask the group for their preference. Scott Wylie cautioned that the temporary park work and stormwater decisions may be influenced by the theme decisions.

Dave Carvo suggested *local* as a theme, noting that the bridge uniquely represented the community.

Tom Boyatt suggested coming up with two thematic categories that include the bridge design itself and the existing landscape. He questioned whether it would be useful to review the existing themes and prioritize them as a group.

Bob Kline suggested using a subcommittee comprised of locals to create a refined list of words and themes for the larger group to vet.

David Sonnichsen suggested adding the word *restoration*, as part of the process will involve restoring the area. He noted the group comments about nature and suggested that the arch itself is a shape that comes from the collective unconsciousness of all people. He noted that the bridge will also help to restore some degree of honor to the river by reflecting itself in the river and serving better than the existing structures. He noted that he would not want to see busy pylons on either end of the bridge. He agreed with Bob that a smaller group conversation would be helpful in choosing a theme.

Carl Deaton noted that *nature* frequently emerges as a theme. He noted the different perspectives on the bridge, with high speed above, slower speeds on Franklin, and even slower speeds for path users. He suggested that the level of appropriate detail will vary based on those perspectives. The county's desire to add a sign should also be included in the design considerations. Dave Carvo agreed, noting that the theme should be complimentary of nature.

Douglas Beauchamp said that using the filter of *nature* would let the process move forward quicker, but said that specific areas of design still need to be determined.

Philip Richardson commented that the bridge theme should not be static, as nature isn't static. He suggested the use of *flow*, *transition*, and *movement* in some way.

Charlotte Behm agreed and said that a forum other than the usual CAG meeting would be best for a theme discussion. Bob Kline suggested having no more than 8-10 people. Larry suggested including Douglas and Eric in the conversation. The group agreed that Bob Kline would arrange for the meeting to take place prior to the Dec. 2 CAG meeting. Jamie offered to provide help as needed.

Greg Hyde asked how specific the list of thematic elements would need to be. Jamie suggested that the smaller group could try to tie the adjectives together. John Ferguson noted the example of the Sauvie Island Bridge from the previous meeting where the bridge committee selected the theme: "Celebrate the Island." He suggested that the group think about why they live in this area and what they take pride in.

Jiri noted that Eugene is a green city with a great respect for nature, high culture, and education. A respect for nature could be conveyed in the design in many ways.

Larry said that the final theme would need to be developed in order to fully engage artists and other groups. Douglas said that it would be important to know where artist involvement is specifically desired first. He suggested prioritizing which parts of the design were the most important to the group.

**THE FINAL LIST OF WORDS AND THEMATIC ELEMENTS INCLUDED:**

- *Graceful*
- *Distinctive*
- *Memorable*
- *Curves*
- *Unique*
- *Innovative*
- *Stylish*
- *Sturdy*
- *Sleek*
- *Natural*
- *Water*
- *Context sensitive*
- *Diversity of nature*
- *Flow*
- *Honoring the Kalapuya*
- *Local*
- *Continuous*
- *Clean lines*
- *Integrated with:*
  - *Structure*
  - *Aesthetic*
  - *Operational*
  - *Environment*
- *All elements working together - "unified"*
- *Simplicity*
- *Strength*
- *Emphasize how the structure works as part of the design*
- *Consistent application*
- *Confluence*
- *Crossings*
- *Reserving wilderness*
- *Restoration*

**OTHER NOTES:**

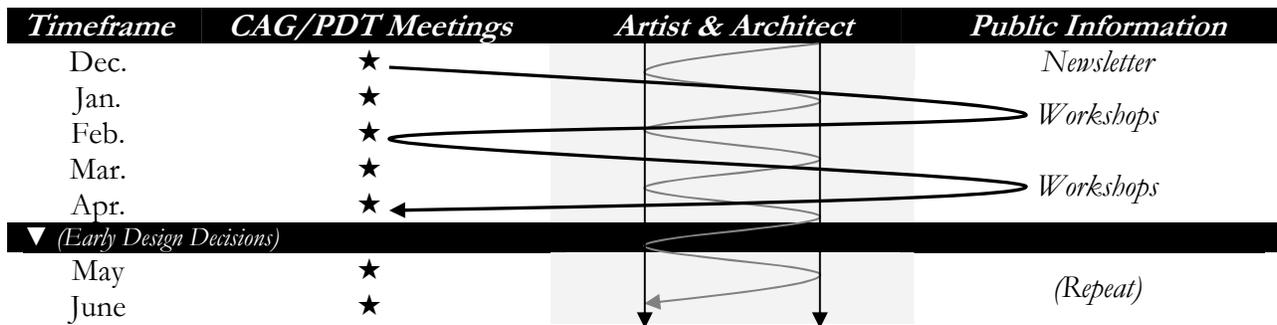
- What is this place about?
- Bring geographic areas to design – What do they look like today?
- Need to develop parameters for the artists / architects to run with
- Develop an overarching frame
- What are we describing?
- Bridge structure is one theme;
  - Existing local elements
  - "Complement Nature"

**OUTLINE NEXT STEPS FOR DESIGN**

Jamie reiterated that Douglas had offered to bring examples of local art. Larry will help designate which design decisions relate to which areas of the site and he will present possible designs for the spandrel columns. The meeting will provide more clarity about the art and architectural decisions and the group will hear back regarding the sub-group discussion of the theme.

While there had been some discussion of issuing a newsletter before Christmas, Jamie suggested that it might make more sense to wait until after first of the year when there is more to say. Various members of the group agreed.

Jamie showed an illustration that depicted points in the early design decision. The CAG and PDT would likely meet monthly to allow coordination with the art and architecture tracks. A January workshop will lay out the design parameters for the public and begin to engage people on the issues that will feed the work of artists and architects. A similar process would follow for the later decisions.



**NEXT STEPS (FLIP CHART NOTES)**

- CAG (Dec. 2) PDT (Dec. 5)
  - Artist examples
  - Geographic design areas
  - Spandrel column/pier shape
  - Arch column bases
  - Artist/Architect track
  - (Prioritize design elements?)
- Neighbors gather to sort theme
- Jamie/Larry/Eric/Douglas/Dick will meet