

Summary – Meeting #18

Community Advisory Group I-5 Willamette River Bridge Project

*January 28, 2009, 10:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Singer Room, Eugene Public Library (100 W. 10th Ave)*

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
- Rich Hazel – Laurel Hill Valley Citizens Association
- Greg Hyde – Willamalane Parks & Recreation District
- Bob Kline – Chair, Harlow Neighbors
- Vicky Mello – CPC for Whilamut Natural Area
- David Sonnichsen – Fairmount Neighbors
- Scott Wylie – Springfield Resident

PDT Members

- Chris Henry – City of Eugene
- Ann Sanders – ODOT, Project Lead

Handouts (available at meeting)

- Agenda
- CAG meeting summary #17 (*Draft*)
- CAG meeting summary #13 (*Final*)
- PDT meeting summary #11 (*Final*)
- PDT meeting summary #12 (*Final*)

Resource Team

- Megan Banks – Public Involvement, LCOG
- Douglas Beauchamp – Lane Arts Council
- Jamie Damon – Public Involvement Manager, JLA
- John Ferguson – Asst. Project Manager, T.Y. Lin
- Larry Fox – Project Manager, OBEC
- Larry Gescher – Slayden
- Kevin Parrish – Hamilton
- Kalin Schmoltdt – Public Involvement Coordinator, JLA
- Jiri Strasky – OBEC
- Dick Upton – ODOT Project Manager, Bridge Delivery Unit

Other Attendees

- Charles Biggs – CPC for Whilamut Natural Area (CAG Alternate)
- John Horn – OBDP
- David Lewis – Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
- Tim McCabe – Oregon Consensus Program
- Jyll Smith – OBDP
- Dave Winship – Winship Designs
- Jay Thibeau – Citizen

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Jamie led a round of introductions. Vicky Mello is now the CPC representative to the CAG and David Sonnichsen will now represent the Fairmount Neighbors.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Jay Thibeau said that he had not received a response to his letters on the project submitted in November and December. He noted that he used to work on projects related to bridges in Portland and wanted to observe whether ODOT has changed how it operates.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Meeting Summaries – The meeting summaries from CAG #14/PDT #13, CAG #15/PDT #14 CAG #16/PDT #15, and CAG #17 were approved and will be posted on the website.

PROJECT UPDATE

Schedule & Budget – Dick said that recent estimates continue to show that the project is within budget. Potential delays are being addressed as they arise and the project team is staying ahead of the tight schedule. The goal is still to be able to utilize the in-water work period this year.

The team is obligated to perform research on the history and function of the mill race as a part of creating an interpretive area. The research efforts will be used as a community and school involvement opportunity.

There have been conversations with the City of Springfield about advancing a bike path project on the north side of Franklin. The need for the path has been long identified, though the level of support from the bridge project is still uncertain. Support could include supportive engineering or salvaged materials from the bridge. Dick offered to keep the committee posted.

Neighborhood Presentations – Dick said that he had spoken with the CPC and discussed short and long term impacts to the park. He will speak to the Fairmount Neighbors on Feb. 10 and is exploring opportunities to speak with the Laurel Hill Valley Neighborhood. Dick reiterated his availability to speak with any group that would like a presentation.

Bob Kline noted a rumor that an infusion of the federal stimulus money could revive the through-arch bridge type. Dick said he had not heard the rumor and he assured the group that the through-arch is not being considered again. Although Representative DeFazio had at one time engaged Matt Garrett on the type selection and the potential for additional funds, that conversation ultimately resulted in affirming the type decision and chastising ODOT for how it was communicated.

David Sonnichsen asked about the in-water work window and when pile-driving is likely to begin. Kevin Parrish said that non-audible, non-pile work would begin June 1. A permit is being sought to perform some non-pile work in April. Larry Fox said that the non-pile work would involve culverts and approaches. Kevin said that pile-driving would hopefully begin on July 1 and proceed quickly. Larry explained that they would not be allowed to pile-drive in June because of new awareness of the effects on wildlife. The team will not be able to take advantage of April for pile-driving during the first year because permits won't be in place.

Dave Carvo asked when fencing and staging work would begin. Larry Fox said that it would depend on permit approval. When permits are in hand, the contractor will begin to prepare for the July 1 work opportunities. Visible staging could be as early as May 1, but likely no earlier.

Jamie noted that questions about construction need to be addressed for the public. She offered to work with Jyll and the PI team to prepare an information sheet about construction timelines.

Design Workshops – Eric noted that the design workshops are planned for Feb. 21 and Feb. 28 and that the CAG is welcome to attend. The workshops are intended to explore options for enhancing architectural design within the bridge area and to identify opportunities for art. The workshops will involve architects, artists, landscape architects, the project team, and the design team.

Douglas noted that they hope to present a specific set of opportunities and recommendations from the workshops at the following CAG meeting and allow the CAG to weigh in on the ideas. Currently, the workshops are expected to cover “opportunity areas” pertaining to the areas at and above the bridge deck, the canoe canal, and treatments of walls and slopes, though this focus may change. Douglas distributed a list of artists who have been invited to participate. Currently, these artists are involved only in the workshop and in creative development. The sheet summarized the reasons for engaging each of the various artists.

Bob Kline asked about the role of CAG members in the workshops. Eric said that the CAG members would be welcome to join the groups. Early parts of the workshop would be oriented towards grounding the participants in the project background. Breakout groups will then focus on the specific work areas. The workshop format will lend itself to CAG members dropping by or staying all day.

Jamie noted that the CAG could help the technical experts by sharing and explaining the conversations and priorities that have emerged from the committee meetings. Bob Kline noted that it would be important to have CAG members present at the workshops so they can report on the process. Megan encouraged the CAG to come and observe. She also noted that there would be a Friday night orientation prior to the first workshop. Jyll Smith said that they would try to get a reporter to cover the event and keep the public aware of the process.

Scott Wylie asked how the workshops would be divided between the architectural and the arts. Larry Fox explained that they have decided not to separate the two. The plan is to form about six groups that will focus on different design areas and provide representatives from each discipline as a resource for each group. The workshop on Feb. 21 will focus on brainstorming ideas while the Feb. 28 workshop will focus those ideas so they can be brought back to the CAG. Douglas noted that the workshops will encourage the committee discussions in early March.

Charlotte Behm pointed out that other groups such as parks and the Kalapuyas also need to participate in the workshop discussions. She questioned the role of the CAG as “observers” in the process. Larry Fox suggested that “resources” might be a better term, as CAG members should be available to answer questions as needed and share their perspective while keeping the ideas grounded in the project. Eric added that the participants would not be operating in a vacuum; they will be exposed to the project background and previous feedback that has guided the project to date.

Public Involvement – Megan noted that the latest newsletter should have arrived earlier in the month. The most imminent upcoming events are the open houses in Springfield and Eugene on Feb. 9. CAG members are encouraged to attend one or both events and to solicit comments from attendees or provide comments themselves. Questions about the open houses should be directed to Megan. The open house will include information on the emerging theme, renderings of the deck-arch bridge, and the focus areas for the design workshop. The team will also be soliciting information on the mill race. The Springfield open house will also serve as an open house for the Springfield greenway permit because the Springfield permit process is ahead of Eugene’s. Displays

will be included related to that permit. The Eugene permit hearing will likely be held in March. Jamie encouraged that information about the permit be distributed to the public prior to the open house.

Workshops – Megan noted Eric and Douglas’ description. She clarified that CAG members and other representatives of the project would be present to serve as technical, community, and cultural resources. Jamie suggested clarifying the role of the CAG and others in advance of the workshops.

THEME DISCUSSION

Douglas noted that during the previous discussion of the theme the CAG and PDT had raised the issue of involving the Kalapuya and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde in the process and seeking feedback on the theme choice. Dick Upton met with the tribe and David Lewis to discuss the theme and tribal involvement. Douglas introduced David Lewis as a long time resident of Eugene and the Cultural Resources Manager for the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

David Lewis said that he was in the process of finishing his PhD at the U of O and has been working for the tribe about 2 ½ years. His concern about the theme and naming of the bridge is that a relevant context be created for the people who live in the area. The tribe is interested in providing educational opportunities and correctly representing the history of the area. David acknowledged the relevance of the term “Whilamut” for the area, noting the park and monuments with Kalapuya words. He said that though the Kalapuya language has no remaining native speakers and is considered linguistically extinct, some people are trying to re-learn it. David said he was excited about the possibilities of interpretive educational opportunities related to the language. He proposed looking more deeply into the history of the tribes and the different groups in the area and then thinking about ways to commemorate those peoples. He questioned whether a deeper context could be embraced that honored the tribe and not just a specific place. He noted, for example, the Mohawk area and suggested the possibility of using regional village names. He asked whether the tribal history can be represented while allowing proper educational opportunities. He noted that his understanding was that the term “Willamette” means “place of falls” and was the original name of the area at Oregon City. While the name “Whilamut” seems to be consistent with the site of the bridges, there are further opportunities to explore in terms of names for the area.

Bob Kline asked David if he could come up with possible names to use. David said that it would take about a month to produce potential names as there were many Kalapuya groups in the area.

Jamie noted that the theme is still emerging. She said that the group wanted to honor the people who came before and that they were looking to David as a resource. Jamie noted that the theme is not yet a proposed name for the bridge, though it may someday be proposed as such. Dick said that they had discussed opportunities beyond using a name simply for guidance. David noted his prior efforts to place interpretive centers around the west and the efforts of the tribe to place themselves back onto their historical landscape through interpretive signage that includes information about who they are, where they lived, and why they were removed. This project could fall within that effort to reconnect people with that history. David pointed out that natives did not go extinct in Oregon.

Scott Wylie asked whether there were stories or insights into the perspective of the specific people and tribes at and around the bridge site. David said it was hard to say for the specific location, though there are several families that still live in the area.

Bob Kline asked whether there are written accounts of the local native population. David said that there are some, though they are hard to come by because disease significantly reduced the size of many tribes by the time settlers arrived.

Douglas asked whether the use of *Whilamut Passage* as a working theme would enhance or detract from future work on building interpretive centers. David said that it was not his place to say whether the theme was appropriate or not, he only wants the group to be aware of possible alternatives.

Jamie asked the CAG how they would like to proceed with David as a resource. Bob Kline said that he would like to get a sense of other possible names.

Dave Carvo asked for clarification that the theme would apply to the architecture and art, and not necessarily a name. Dick said that the selection of the theme could lead to referring to the project as the *Whilamut Passage Project*, but a more extensive naming process will take place once the bridge is finished.

Bob Kline asked whether funding would be available in order to provide research for the interpretive centers. Dick said that construction costs could be absorbed by the project, though there has not yet been discussion of how to fund the research.

David Sonnichsen asked whether David Lewis had spoken with Esther Stutzman about the theme. David Lewis said he had not. Charlotte Behm said that she had spoken with Esther a month ago and Esther had indicated that she would be willing to participate in the workshops as a cultural resource.

Jamie asked whether David Lewis could research place names and come back to the CAG in March. David said he could and that he was planning to come to the Feb. 20 workshop orientation to share his insights on the theme.

DESIGN PROGRESS

Status – Larry explained that the team is working to get the contractor started in late spring or early summer. He noted a map of temporary path alignments that had been determined through meetings with Parks and Open Spaces, the CPC, and Willamalane Parks and Recreation. The team is trying to isolate the contractor's activities as much as possible. Some temporary measures will be necessary during the first construction season because permits will not be in place to provide new trail connections or allow old trails to be closed. The team will try to accommodate bike and pedestrian movement, though the contractor will need to use flaggers at times. Preliminary detour signage is also posted on the map and Larry encouraged the CAG to provide comments. The goal is to minimize any visual clutter from the signs while still conveying to people where they need to go.

Larry noted that the design matrix from the previous meeting had been updated based on feedback from the online survey of the committees. The matrix now includes additional stakeholders including representatives of the tribe, neighborhood groups, local government officials (represented on the PDT), interested CAG members (who will provide input at workshops), and adjoining property owners.

The online survey also asked for a sense of priorities regarding the design elements. The findings were largely consistent with previous feedback. Above deck gateway elements were deemed the highest priority. Wall and slope treatments were also considered important.

Jamie described the matrix as a work in progress that can help remind the committee of who needs to be involved in each design decision. She said that the team would need to check with the CAG at each meeting to make sure that the proper groups are being involved.

Larry noted that the Steering Committee had decided that lighting should be taken off the table at the design workshops because of the complexity of the issue. Decisions regarding spandrel columns will hopefully be decided by the end of the day's meeting while elements pertaining to the canoe canal underpass configuration and materials have essentially already been decided. The focus of the design workshops will be on the "early" and "later" design decisions.

Jamie suggested that information about the temporary improvements needs to be distributed to the public soon. Larry said that upcoming meetings will clarify what to expect. Jamie suggested adding a "communication" column to the matrix to ensure that information about each design element is properly publicized.

Charles Biggs noted that a bike/ped summit would be held on Jan. 31 and would be a good venue to share the temporary trails information. The event is from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at South Eugene High School. Bob Kline said that he engaged with that group and would be happy to take any relevant information. Megan offered to coordinate with Bob and Larry about displays. Jamie and Jyll offered to collaborate on language to put out to the public about the trails.

Larry noted that work has been broken into several early work packages and that the early work plans are available for review. The team feels that the plan will facilitate movement in the park, though it won't be possible to completely avoid impacts.

Pier Bases & Spandrel Columns – Jiri reminded the group of their previous conversation on piers and arches. He reiterated his goal of finding a unified solution for all of the piers and throughout the entire structure.

Jiri showed three conceptual spandrel shapes. The first concept (A) extruded the middle of each spandrel column, the second (B) recessed into the middle of the spandrel, and the third (C) was similar to concept B, though it used a simplified shape for the columns where the arches meet. Jiri noted how each shape looked the same from a distance and the differences are only noticeable up close.

Because the arch shape might lend itself to climbing, Jiri proposed inserting a 7-foot wall at the outside base of each arch where the arch connects to the spandrel column in order to prevent casual climbers. Jiri suggested using a different texture on the wall to preserve the appearance of the arch shape. The spandrel columns are narrower than the arches and so the wall would need to be at least as wide as the arch. Because of the width of the wall, concept A does not allow for as much visual continuity of the column reaching the ground concepts B and C.

Jiri showed examples of gateway elements from the bridge over Crooked River Gorge as well as elements on the new I-35 bridge in Minneapolis. He noted how the sign-bridges tend to detract from the visual impact of the artistic elements. Jiri described several other concepts for gateway walls and columns. He noted that the gateway objects should be proportional for the people walking along the river as well as for drivers.

Charlotte Behm asked about using gateway elements between the bridges. Larry said that there would be space on the section of land north of the bridges, and while it would be possible to place something between the bridges, anything so located would need to be 4-feet behind the bridge rail.

Rich Hazel asked about the need for new signs on the bridge. Larry said that there is only one sign bridge at the south end of the project that will need to be replaced.

Dave Carvo asked whether introducing elements between the bridges would complicate future maintenance efforts. Jiri suggested that the concepts were only starting points for further discussion.

Scott Wylie cautioned that above deck elements should not muddy the bridge appearance by “pretending” to be part of it. He observed that the rail in the renderings appears to be smooth and continuous above the deck-line, though there has been discussion of how the rail will need to change form and be solid over the railroad. Scott suggested that any such transition in transparency be smooth instead of abrupt or alternatively that any abruptness should serve to enhance the structure and create interest without being distracting to traffic moving through. He reiterated his previous questions about deliberately spacing the railing piers.

Charlotte Behm noted Chris Henry’s idea about incorporating the wall requirements over the railroad into the above deck features. Larry noted that the placement of gateway features at the south end of the project was less clear than at the north end. He noted that the same group will address railings and gateway elements at the design workshops because of their interplay. Jiri encouraged that the scale of the railings and gateway elements be proportional to the overall project.

Larry Gescher asked whether it would be possible to continue the standard railing over the tracks and add a fence with a splash-guard behind the rail. Larry Fox said that the option is possible, though a solid concrete barrier is often preferred and splash-guards may not be as attractive as other options. Eric Gunderson asked how high the fence needs to be. Larry said that a throw fence needs to be 10-feet high. He noted the possibility of continuing the fence over Franklin Blvd.

Scott Wylie encouraged careful transitions between functions and realms so as to discourage a cluttered feeling. Jiri noted that the I-35 bridge uses a partially solid and partially transparent barrier. He said that it would be possible to facilitate a good transition to wall above the railroad.

Larry Fox noted that the one sign bridge in the project area is being designed to allow precast panels around the end post. Architectural treatments could be applied to these panels in order to beautify an otherwise utilitarian element of the project.

Larry noted that while spandrel concepts B and C do allow more visual flexibility if a wall element is used, such a wall is not yet certain and other techniques could improve the appearance of the concept A spandrel shape. He noted that the spandrel shapes are only visible up-close, and there is no substantial cost difference.

Ann Sanders asked whether there had been any consideration of whether the space under the bridge could facilitate camp sites. Larry said that those considerations will make a difference when surfaces and slope paving are being considered. Rip-rap piles could be used to discourage sleeping, as could changing the geometry of the ground. Larry noted that the bike path will be shifted closer to the

river in order to allow more headroom for those passing under the arch. He said that they would work with Parks to determine an appropriate location and to avoid creating pinch points.

Chris Henry asked whether the width of the wall could be wider than the arch. Jiri said that he felt the wall should be kept narrow in order to preserve the beauty of the arch shape to the ground.

Scott Wylie said that he preferred concept B because it is more consistent and creates a nice shadow line. He disliked the variation in concept C.

David Sonnichsen said that he liked the chamfered edges and also preferred B. He questioned whether texture on the barrier wall could serve as handholds that would facilitate climbing. Larry said that they would consider the possibility during the discussion of wall texture and color during the workshops.

Scott Wylie suggested that there are more aesthetically pleasing alternatives within the limited options available for deterring misuse. For example, rip-rap could be combined with more visually pleasing stones if it is used under the bridge.

Jamie polled the group about their preferred spandrel choice. All members preferred concept B. Eric Gunderson said he liked the contrast of the slender vertical columns. Douglas said that the safety and shelter issue should be addressed before the design workshops so different groups don't end up working at cross-purposes. Jamie said that concept B would be passed to the PDT on Friday.

Larry said that they had originally thought there would be room for feedback on the pier-bases, but at that time the design team did not yet have actual geotechnical boring information. Once the location of the rock was determined, the need for a large concrete pile-cap was determined to be unnecessary and removed the opportunity for design variation. The current design is driven by hydraulic and structural needs as well as efforts to minimize debris hang-ups.

Charlotte asked whether it would be possible for someone to climb onto the central pier. Larry said that the pier will usually be high above the water and inaccessible. Conditions at high water would make it difficult or impossible to reach. Scott Wylie suggested angling the top of the pier to make it more difficult to climb. Larry noted that the contractor already has constructability concerns about the current pier shape.

Greg Hyde observed that the issue of creating campsites was already an issue as the arch form presents opportunities for obscured vision under the bridge even without the additional walls. He suggested that maintenance be considered along with other potential preventative measures. Dave Carvo noted that problems tend to emerge where people are able to be out of sight. Greg Hyde suggested that the issue will be ongoing and needs to be considered. Larry said that they would ideally be engaging ODOT about security concerns and vetting ideas with other stakeholders before the design workshops.

Eric Gunderson noted that he was interested in how above-deck features would work at the south end of the bridge because there is no ground like there is at the north end. Larry also noted that the southern ends of the bridges don't end at the same place. Jiri suggested that an element in the median could be a solution.

Ann Sanders asked how the group would move forward with the workshops considering David's comments on the theme. Jamie said that she understood that David supported the theme, though there is more work to be done regarding how to honor the people in this area. Scott Wylie said that the different consciousnesses at the workshop will remain true even if the *Whilamut Passage* theme remains a work in process. Douglas noted that the theme is bigger than *Whilamut* and also includes *Passage*.

NEXT STEPS

The committee coordinating the workshops will be meeting again and sending out a communication regarding the details of the CAG role. The next open house will be on Feb. 9 and information on that event is in the newsletter. The next CAG meeting is scheduled for March 4.

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 9: Open House(s)

- Springfield Library Meeting Room
(225 Fifth Street)
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Eugene Library Tykeson/Bascom rooms
(100 W. 10th Avenue)
4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

February 20: Design Workshop Orientation

- Atrium Building
(10th & Olive, Eugene)
5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.

February 21: Design Workshop 1

- Atrium Building
(10th & Olive, Eugene)
8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

February 28: Design Workshop 2

- Atrium Building
(10th & Olive, Eugene)
8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.