

FINAL

Summary – Meeting #16

Project Development Team – I-5 Willamette River Bridge Project

December 5, 2008, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

McLane Room (644 A Street, Springfield)

ACTION ITEMS

PDT members will:

1. Provide additional comments on the PDT #15/CAG#16 meeting summary to Kalin Schmoldt via e-mail (kalin@jla.us.com).
2. Provide comments on the design element matrix.

The project team will:

1. Send out the design element matrix for comments from the CAG and PDT.
2. Consult with tribal authorities regarding the use of the theme *Whilamut Passage*.
3. Notify PDT of next scheduled meeting.

ATTENDANCE

Voting Members

- Don Angermayer – ODOT Area Maintenance
- Charlotte Behm – Community Advisory Group (CAG) representative
- Molly Cary – Environmental Manager, ODOT Region 2
- Chris Henry – Transportation Planning Engineer, City of Eugene Public Works
- Al Heyn – Bridge Engineer, ODOT Region 2
- Kent Howe – Planning Director, Lane County
- Greg Mott – Community Planning Manager, City of Springfield
- Ann Sanders – ODOT Project Leader, Area Rep. for Lane County ODOT Region 2

Resource Members/Voting Member Alternates/Observers

- Douglas Beauchamp – Lane Arts Council
- Megan Banks – Public Involvement Manager, LCOG
- Jamie Damon – Public Involvement Manager, JLA
- Carl Deaton – Designer, ODOT Region 2 Roadway
- John Ferguson – T.Y. Lin International
- Larry Fox -- OBEC
- Larry Gescher – Slayden Construction
- Joe Harwood – Public Information Office, ODOT Region 2
- Suzanne Roberts – OBDP

- Kevin Parrish – Hamilton Construction
- Kalin Schmoldt – Public Involvement Coordinator, JLA
- Jyll Smith – Public Affairs, ODOT
- David Sonnichsen – CAG member
- Richard Upton – Project Manager, ODOT

HANDOUTS

- Agenda
- Summary of PDT #15/CAG#16 Meeting (draft)
- Summary of PDT Meeting #11 (final)
- Summary of PDT Meeting #12 (final)

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Jamie Damon welcomed the group and noted that the agenda was similar to that of Monday's CAG meeting. The PDT will be asked to make a decision regarding the CAG theme recommendation.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Summary of Meetings PDT#13/CAG#14 & PDT #14/CAG#15 – There were no changes to the summaries.

PROJECT UPDATE

EA – Dick noted that the EA had received FHWA concurrence last week and a FONSI decision has been approved. Jamie added that the FHWA has signed the document but not yet returned it. The version of the EA as reviewed by the PDT and CAG remains the same and 120 page addenda will explain refinements to the document. Copies will be posted on the website and available on request. Most of the changes were based on language.

Chris Henry asked whether the decision could be appealed. Molly Cary said that a third party could challenge the process within six months. Dick said that the team is confident in the defensibility of the process. At this point the NEPA process is complete unless there is a legal challenge.

Budget – Project costs will be reviewed at increments through the process. Estimates will come from the A&E, CM/GC, and an independent group. At this point the estimates are comparable and within budget.

Other news – Congressman DeFazio has expressed interest in the project. More news will be provided as it becomes available.

THEME DISCUSSION

Jamie explained that she had met with Eric Gunderson, Dick Upton, Larry Fox, and Douglas Beauchamp on Dec. 1 to talk about the arts and architecture tracts. Douglas then shared examples of how art and architecture have been used creatively in the local area. The presentation mirrored the presentation to the CAG on Tuesday, with a variety of slides representing a wide variety of

public art in the region. Douglas was involved in most of the efforts shown. The examples were selected based on their use of durable and long-lasting materials that could be used outdoors.

Douglas explained how the members of the CAG *Theme Team* (Charlotte Behm, Scott Wylie, David Sonnichsen, Bob Kline, and Douglas Beauchamp) had met after the last meeting and addressed the theme. He distributed a paper that explained how the group had sought to identify words, phrases and images that encompassed a sense of past, present and future for the space. The team felt that naming the bridge will be important in this regard and will provide an opportunity to present the bridge to a global audience. The team also observed that while the bridge is a central feature of the project, the space incorporates many discrete places. The group felt that the “placeness” was most represented by the river, but also by animals, first peoples, and settlers. The natural area serves as a link between the cities and the name of the area is intended to honor the Kalapuya people and their language. The group noted that the Kalapuya word “whilamut” means *where the river ripples and runs fast* and they proposed that *whilamut* be a part of the theme.

The group also observed that the bridge conveys people underneath by a variety of modes, including pathways, roads, railroad, the river, and the canoe canal. The group felt that this movement across or through and transit by conveyance implied a sense of *passage*, and the group recommended *passage* as the second part of the theme.

The *Theme Team* unanimously recommended *Whilamut Passage* as the name of the bridge and theme of the project. The theme was supported by the CAG. Jamie noted discussion of the bridge name and the fact that name will not be decided at this time. Though he was not present for the discussion, Trevor Taylor also sent a message of support for the theme.

Chris Henry expressed concern about obtaining approval from the Kalapuya people and formulating a backup theme. An alternative possibility would be *Willamette Passage*, though Scott Wylie had noted that the broader meaning of *Whilamut* was more related to the idea of place. Jamie noted that the CAG liked the word “Whilamut” because it instills curiosity, uniqueness and a sense of wonder.

Don Angermayer questioned whether the name would effectively convey the desired meaning to through travelers.

Greg Mott asked how the use of *Willamette Passage* would change the focus of the theme. Douglas suggested that *Willamette* might feel more generic as the river runs length of the valley, whereas *Whilamut* creates curiosity and brings the idea home to a specific place. The theme will be used to guide materials, how the project looks to remote visitors, and how the project is portrayed through text and pictures. The theme will also help the creativity of the design. Greg asked about the potential transferability of the theme and name to other bridges. Douglas said that this particular crossing is particularly well suited to the name because of the number of interacting elements. Charlotte Behm noted that the name is reflective of history and imparts a sense of the nature that is and the nature that was. She noted that efforts to recognize the Kalapuya have been previously well received and that would be appropriate to honor them with a word that has deeper meaning. Though some people had initially expressed concerns about the pronunciation of *Whilamut*, it hasn't been an issue.

Ann Sanders noted the CAG discussion of involving the Kalapuya in the theme development. She asked whether the necessary coordination with the tribes might slow the process. Charlotte Behm

said that work with the Kalapuya on naming the Natural Area and installation of the Talking Stones was fairly quick. Any arts endeavors relating to the Kalapuya would require a commitment to working with the tribes. David Sonnichsen noted that the Kalapuya had been the dominant tribe in the area and there were only about 140 words of their native language remaining. Using a Kalapuya name would help to honor their history. Jamie said that the team would be mindful of inviting the Kalapuya to be a part of the process. Douglas said that David Lewis, the tribe's Cultural Manager, should be accessible and able to address the possibility soon. He noted that a sense of direction on the theme should be decided before beginning conversations with the tribe.

Chris Henry said that he thought the Eugene Council would support the theme and encourage respect for the diversity issues relating to the First Peoples. He encouraged ODOT to work closely with the tribes to form uniform agreements that reflect their history and ensure proper communication and commitment. He cautioned against repeating the same communication mistakes when relating to the tribes. Dick offered to assume responsibility for engaging the Kalapuya if it is the group's decision. Chris noted that Dick should convey that the theme is also about Passage, and not just the tribe.

Kent Howe asked whether the use of *Whilamut* would limit the meaning because it could be applied to other locations along the river. He noted that the bridge also serves as a transition into and out of the *Willamette* Valley. Douglas said that the theme will encompass more than the bridge itself, and that the use of *Passage* will help convey a sense of space and time. Charlotte Behm noted that the word was selected for the Natural Area because it is likely the derivation of the word *Willamette* and appropriate to the location. The naming of the *Whilamut* Natural Area was the first formally named area to acknowledge the tribe and the location is a significant, special place to the Kalapuya.

Jyll Smith noted that although the naming of the bridge is a secondary task, the theme will help drive the process forward and it may someday come to be an informal name. Molly Cary said that she could support the theme if the conversation can stay focused and not jump to naming.

Al Heyn said that he liked the theme and the recognition of cultural history. He suggested that it may be a challenge to incorporate art into the project that is developed along the lines of the theme.

Carl Deaton suggested that it might be difficult to define the word for some people. He asked whether the name has a historical connection with the project area. Charlotte Behm said that it was not the historical name. Carl suggested that the group remain open to the possibility that the Kalapuya may have a more fitting name in mind. He suggested assuming a combination of *Passage* with a name that is meaningful to the native peoples.

The PDT expressed unanimous support for exploring the theme *Whilamut Passage*. Dick will work within ODOT protocols to establish contact with the tribes and report back to the group before any notice on the theme is issued. Chris Henry acknowledged the significance of the selection. Jamie noted that the theme was conceivably a large part of the bridge's "signature" status.

DESIGN APPROACH

Jamie noted that the decision on spandrel column and pier shapes would be postponed until January when Jiri Strasky will be able to attend the committee meetings.

Larry Fox outlined design elements illustrated on an aerial map. A matrix handout listed “immediate,” “early,” and “later” decisions. The matrix attempts to provide an initial look at which groups will be responsible for which design elements on the map:

- **Soundwalls** in the northeast quadrant of the project offer treatment opportunities on the I-5 side of the wall.
- **Canoe Canal:** The final configuration will be decided by the three parks groups. The concrete channel will be reduced in size. A cross section will hopefully be finalized in the near future so a sense of the artistic opportunities can be developed.
- **Fill retaining wall:** The wall is required to remain within the existing right of way after the temporary easement expires.
- **Temporary and permanent park improvements:** Safety improvements are needed for path users during construction. The temporary path will circumvent the contractor staging area to the west. Permanent improvements could include a roundabout in the area of the Frog Pond and a connection to North Walnut Street.
- **Eastgate Woodlands:** Presents temporary and permanent path changes. The path that was removed when the detour bridge was built will be restored and the paved path to North Walnut will be removed. Permit challenges may delay the path work until the second work season.
- **Bridge elements:** Immediate decisions involve **approach span pier** and **spandrel column** shapes. 3D renderings of options will be available at the January meeting. **Above deck features** also present opportunities that need not be restricted to pylons. Features could include a series of elements approaching the bridge, not just on the bridge itself. ODOT has committed to the public desire for open **bridge rail** instead of a concrete barrier despite increased maintenance. Although options are currently limited, the team will seek viable alternatives. A solid rail will need to be used over the railroad tracks.

Al Heyn noted that FHWA maintains a website on crash-tested rail. Chris Henry suggested that the Texas Department of Transportation could also provide options.

- **Temporary and permanent improvements under and around the bridge (south end):** Although permitting has required decisions on the geometry of the restored channel, there are still opportunities to discuss the use of **vegetation**. The **bike path** will need to be shifted north to fit the new channel alignment and cross the channel on a bridge built with salvaged beams from the detour bridge. The site near the millrace ruins could be a good location for an **interpretive site** and information on the environmental restoration. The contractor will use a temporary road over the channel for access. The area under the southernmost approach spans will be a wetlands and off-channel pond restoration project.
- **Lighting for paths:** The use of lighting poses challenges in a natural area, though some sort of unobtrusive lighting may be needed for safety reasons.
- **Bridge lighting:** As with path lighting, the use of decorative lighting within the natural area is in question. Other projects have used fiber optic cables to provide low level, low energy consumption accent lighting.
- **Retaining walls (south end):** The walls are of varying visibility. A large wall will protect the Laurel Hill Valley neighborhood and presents options for treatments on the sides exposed to motorists and the neighborhood.

Discussions continue about the possibility of eliminating the retaining walls on the north end of the project because of graffiti. A local group has received a grant to look into the possibility of creating a mountain bike skills course into the bridge right of way. Though there may not be much room for such a facility, the design will try to not preclude the possibility.

The elements on the aerial map are captured in the matrix handout. The cost field for each design element will be populated as it becomes known. The design elements will need to fit with the project budget and costs could vary widely.

Ann Sanders noted Scott Wylie's concern about the use of signs and suggested thinking about signage and sign bridge needs as soon as possible. She noted a lengthy approval process for a sign bridge on a previous project. Larry noted that the project currently only affects one sign bridge that will need to be replaced because of the shifted roadway. Chris Henry asked whether it was possible to emulate the spandrel and pier shapes with the sign bridge supports. Larry said it was possible, though it creates added cost and adds time for the extra fabrication. Dick offered to pursue the issue. Carl Deaton noted that Scott Jelo(sp?) was the appropriate person to contact regarding sign bridge designs.

Larry noted that the opportunities for the path alignment on the north shore were omitted from the map. Bridge security also presents concerns and possibilities. The arches raise the question of how to avoid creating an attractive nuisance. Jiri will present some ideas on the subject in January.

Jamie noted Scott's idea about retaining part of the old Canoe Canal structure for aesthetic purposes.

Chris Henry expressed concern about the fencing requirements above the railroad and suggested that the fence could be incorporated into the design as an arched above-deck feature. Larry noted examples of ornamental fencing Portland. Jamie noted Scott's interest in preserving continuity in the form. The screen above the railroad would be built during roughly the same timeframe as the bridge rail depending on how exotic the fence design becomes. A solid concrete barrier will also be necessary over the tracks to prevent water from falling onto the railroad right of way.

NEXT STEPS

Jamie said she had met with Eric, Douglas, Dick, and Larry to discuss the early design conversations. The group recommended that Eric Gunderson take the lead on the architectural design charette in February in order to address the "challenge of a gateway." The group reasoned that the gateway features should be addressed by the architecture group because the features will be integrated with the structure. Jiri will also participate. Concurrently, Douglas will lead a local artist charette to address the treatment of walls and surfaces and other artistic opportunities. The new theme will help the groups coordinate their work and each events will inform the other through visuals and hands-on processes. More specifics will come at the end of January. There will be similar coordination with landscape architects later in the process.

- **Newsletter** (*week of 1/5/09*) – The newsletter will be sent after the holidays and will bring the public up to date with the happenings with the EA, present new design images, and elaborate on upcoming design decisions.
- **Update web site** (*early January 2009*) – Jyll Smith and Kalin Schmoltdt will work to update the site for the design phase. Megan Banks will then maintain the site.

- **CAG (1/28/09)** – The later meeting date will allow Jiri Strasky to attend and give the team time to develop the content for the artist and architecture charettes. The meeting will also be used to decide on spandrel column and pier shapes.
- **PDT (1/30/09)**
- **Public open houses (week of 2/9/09)** – The open houses will provide the public an opportunity to see the designs up close and provide input to feed the charettes in mid February. The open houses will be largely informational; letting people know how the design is being organized and helping to identify stakeholders for the different design elements. The open house will also serve as an opportunity to introduce and explain the project theme.
- **Artist and architecture charettes (week of 2/16)** – The charettes will be longer meetings with a creative emphasis. The charette attendees will work with drawings and produce options to address specific design challenges.
- **CAG (3/5/09) & PDT (3/6/09)** – Review results of charettes.
- **Public open houses (April 2009)**
- **CAG & PDT** – The groups will meet to discuss design decisions and begin the landscape conversation.

Jamie offered to send out the design element matrix for comments to both the CAG and PDT. The goal is to collect comments and ensure that no groups are left out. The matrix will also help to communicate the design process to the public. Larry noted that the matrix should not be considered final or exhaustive at this point.

Chris Henry noted good bridge examples on the Oregon Coast that use different sized arches and other shapes to compliment the approaches to the bridges. He noted the question of whether railing could be timed and tuned to visually “play a song.” The committee discussed some roadways that were tuned to create music when driven at certain speeds.

CLOSE