



Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) Meeting #13

6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, March 22, 2007

Sherwood Police Training Center

24095 Borchers Drive, Sherwood

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendance:

Tom Sullivan, Wilsonville CCI
Dave Volz, Tualatin CCI
Ray Phelps, Wilsonville Chamber of Commerce
Jerry Renfro, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue
Bob Adams, Tualatin Chamber of Commerce
Loretta Pickerell, 1000 Friends of Oregon
Barbara Shields, Friends of the Refuge
Tom Aufenthie, CPO 5
Jon Reimann, Westside Economic Alliance
Mike Feves, Far West Association of
Susan Rychlick, Sherwood Chamber of Commerce
Ron Johnson, Washington County Farm Bureau

Staff present:

Russ Knoebel, Washington County
Amy Gibbons, ODOT
Tim Wilson, ODOT
Mark Turpel, Metro
Scott Richman, DEA
Jef Kaiser, DEA
Vaughn Brown, JLA
Kristin Hull, JLA
Kalin Schmoldt, JLA
Lawrence Odell, Washington County
Leslie Howell, Howell Consulting

Members absent:

Nick Storie, Metro CCI
Elliot Eki, AAA Oregon
Adrian Emery, Sherwood CCI
Jack Laverty, Oregon Trucking Association

Meeting purpose

- Report on EMT screening results recommendations to PSC
- Finalize SWG input on concept elements and themes

1. Welcome, meeting purpose and agenda – Vaughn Brown, JLA

Vaughn welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda and materials distributed to the group prior to the meeting. He announced that Lawrence Odell had been elected EMT chair and would serve as a liaison between the EMT and SWG. The group adopted the meeting #12 summary with changes. A committee member confirmed that Walt Bartell was a consulting engineer with David Evans and Associates.

Vaughn confirmed that future SWG meetings would be held on the second Wednesday of each month.

2. Project progress update – Vaughn Brown, JLA

Vaughn reminded the group that much work has already occurred. He briefly reviewed the historic development of the project and recapped the results of the 2030 modeling projecting increasing traffic growth between 2005 and 2030. He reviewed the regulations that govern the development of the range of alternatives and described the SWG role in the upcoming alternatives analysis process. He told the group that adhering to this process is important because even though the project isn't in a formal NEPA phase currently, it will be if it moves to the next project phase following selection of a preferred solution. requirements.

He briefly described each of the following as the likely range of alternatives included in the alternatives analysis phase of the project:

- No-build alternative
- TSM/TDM alternative
- Enhanced Existing System alternative
- One or more connector alternatives inside the UGB
- One or more connector alternatives partially or entirely outside the UGB

A committee member asked if the definition of “corridor” had changed since the last meeting. Jef explained that, as a result of the last EMT meeting, the definition of connector was relaxed to also include roadway types that are partially-controlled (not fully-controlled).

A committee member expressed confusion about how standards set in the Regional Transportation Plan could be changed. Mark explained that the change in the definition of corridor was requested by Metro to allow more flexibility in designing a corridor to meet the study area's transportation needs.

3. Discuss concept elements screening results and recommendations – Lawrence Odell, Washington County and Jef Kaiser, DEA

Vaughn introduced the next agenda item by recalling the main concerns and issues raised by the SWG in their initial review of the elements at their last meeting. He noted that the concerns of the SWG and EMT were very similar and that the actions taken by the EMT and included in their recommendation were aimed at resolving the same issues. He asked, for the sake of ensuring that the recommendation information was fully and clearly presented, that SWG members indicate which elements they wished to discuss further as they were described in the presentation and they would be noted on a flipchart and discussed at the end of the presentation.

Lawrence began by reviewing the EMT's unanimous recommendation about which ideas should be taken off the table and not considered further because they do not meet the project's purpose and need. He also told the group that all EMT members (Metro, Washington County, Clackamas County, Tualatin, Sherwood, Wilsonville, ODOT and FHWA) were in attendance at the meeting. He told the group that changes to the recommendation since the last SWG meeting were the result of continued EMT discussion.

Lawrence reviewed the color coding that has been used to screen the elements. He explained the following:

- Green – could meet purpose and need and should be studied further
- Yellow – could be combined and studied further
- Red – do not meet purpose and need and should be eliminated from further study

He told the group that Jef would talk more about elements #26 and #27 since they were new since the last meeting. He told the group that the change to the definition of corridor reflects the EMT's desire to move forward without any preconceived notion about the solution. He also confirmed, in response to a member's question, that the element numbers were random and did not reflect ranking of the elements.

A committee member noted that the matrix still contained the old definition of corridor. Lawrence confirmed that the matrix should be updated to reflect the new corridor definition.

EMT recommendation on element screening – Jef Kaiser

Jef directed the group's attention first to the elements that have been labeled as "green." He reviewed and described the elements one at a time. Lawrence reminded the group about the level of detail of the drawings and that the intermediate access could be in a different location.

He then reviewed the yellow elements and reminded the SWG that the yellow elements could be combined to create an Expand Existing System alternative or with green elements to form connector alternatives.

Finally, he reviewed the red elements that the EMT is recommending that the PSC drop from further consideration. He noted that element #9 was added to the EMT's recommendation for elimination from further study at the request of the City of Wilsonville because of its impact on Wilsonville's planning, likely impacts on agriculture and resource land and limited effectiveness at serving regional and through travel demand. He noted that this element's original inclusion as one of the green elements was one of the SWG's concerns expressed at their last meeting as well.

He noted that while connectors on Tualatin Road and Tualatin-Sherwood Road are recommended to be eliminated from further consideration, new hybrid elements (partially limited access facilities) in these locations have been added to the green elements. Jef also reminded the group that these elements represent ideas from the EMT, SWG and public and would be further refined and added to by the design team in developing alternatives.

A committee member clarified that the change in definition of "corridor" was a result of a concern from Metro and not from the public. Vaughn, in response to a SWG question, told the group that they would have the opportunity to review the range of alternatives beginning with their May meeting.

A committee member asked what progress the PMT had made on developing TSM/TDM and Expand Existing System alternatives and suggested that those options could move ahead

before the new corridor alternatives since they must be studied. Jef responded that work on developing those alternatives had begun and that the SWG would be review preliminary range of alternatives including the TSM/TDM and Expand Existing System alternatives at their May meeting.

A SWG member suggested that the Expand Existing System alternative might solve the project's need and should, therefore, be advanced before connector alternatives are developed. Another SWG member clarified that analysis completed up to this point suggest that a new connector is needed and the whole range should be developed for comparison purposes. Jef explained that the Expand Existing System alternative will go beyond the improvements included in existing transportation plans (RTP and TSPs) and will be analyzed using the same criteria as all other alternatives.

A committee member asked how success on this project will be measured. He noted that success should be measured by some amount of congestion relief. Jef told the group that the project purpose was focused on addressing regional and through traffic and that they would have the opportunity to compare travel forecasts for different alternatives and the no-build alternative.

A committee member commented that last year the committee was told that the connector was not necessarily a highway and that now it seems clear that the project is focused on locating a highway connector. Vaughn indicated that that comment would be noted and could be returned to as the range of alternatives is described at the next SWG meeting. He reminded the group that the range of alternatives described earlier in the meeting contained a number of solutions that do not rely on a highway connector.

SWG comments on green elements

Element #4: A SWG member noted that he'd like to focus on consistent explanations for carrying forward or setting aside elements. He wanted to know why element #4 was recommended for further consideration when it seems inconsistent with what Jef had said in the past about travel movements. Jef responded that a prime characteristic of element #4 is that it uses the power line corridor which made sense to many of the open house participants. It also addresses some of Sherwood's town center concerns by placing the connection with Hwy 99W farther north. Lawrence asked that SWG members alert him to any inconsistencies that they may notice from the project team.

A SWG member asked why #4 was green and #22 was yellow. Jef explained that #4 and #22 were similar and that #4 was along the power line corridor and #22 was a Tonquin Road arterial connection. If #4 was an arterial route rather than a connector it would be labeled as yellow as well.

A SWG member noted that the project was not well-served by the distinction between greens and yellows since data was not available to distinguish between the two. Vaughn responded that the color scheme was used to identify between those elements that more completely met the project purpose and need while the yellows were good ideas that by themselves would not meet purpose and need but could be combined with each other or green elements as alternatives are developed. He reminded the group that both green and yellow elements would be part of the range of alternatives development process.

Element #7: A SWG member clarified that this option was intended to represent a flyover connection between I-205 and Tualatin-Sherwood Road near Fred Meyer, not a connector on Avery Road and wanted to be clear that when the option was initially drawn at the SWG workshop, it was not intended to represent a connector alignment on Avery Road in Tualatin. Jef noted that the idea of a below-grade or tunnel connection to I-205 is embodied in Element 21 (yellow). The member agreed.

A committee member asked about travel forecasts that showed that demand dropped off as the connector moved further south. Scott explained that the modeling referenced was completed using 2025 (rather than 2030) forecast year from the County's previous study. He also noted that general analysis of potential corridor locations could be completed.

Element #27: A SWG member asked what made this option different than #19. Vaughn explained that it was different because it represented a different (lower order) hybrid facility and was added at the request of an EMT member. He also noted that inclusion of a Tualatin-Sherwood improvement element addressed one of the SWG's concerns from the last meeting.

SWG comments on red elements

Element #5: A SWG member suggested that a yellow element of improving I-5 inside the project area should be added to the yellow group because improvements to I-5 are going to be required with any connector. Another SWG member agreed with the suggestion to identify improvements to I-5 as a yellow.

Element #6: A SWG member noted that this element should be carried forward as a yellow. The project team noted that improvements to Highway 99W in the project area are included in the yellow elements. The SWG member noted that this element should include improvements to Highway 99W north of Sherwood and that improvements could be designed to minimize impacts to Tigard. Jef told the group that element #17 could include capacity improvements to Highway 99W north of Sherwood. He reminded the group that we are trying to screen the options that were suggested by the public and that this does not necessarily represent the entire universe of ideas.

Element #9: A SWG member noted that this element had changed from green to red since the last meeting and asked if this process will continue to narrow the number of greens. Jef explained that after the PSC decision, the PMT would begin to develop alternatives based on the remaining green and yellow alternatives.

SWG comments on yellow elements

Element #12 and #22: A SWG member noted that those two elements go through significant industrial lands and that this is a big issue. A SWG member responded that industrial development relies on a good transportation system which a 124th extension or Tonquin Road improvement might help address.

Vaughn reviewed that the group generally had agreed that both #5- and #6-type elements should be retained with the yellow group to insure that improvements to I-5 and Hwy 99W

in the project area be considered as part of any solution. No other element specific input was noted by the SWG for PSC consideration.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Vaughn reviewed the flipchart comments resulting from the SWG discussion of the EMT recommendation. He asked each SWG member to express final sentiments about the EMT element screening recommendation with SWG comments being forwarded to the PSC:

- Jerry Renfro: OK
- Loretta Pickerell: OK, but still has significant concerns about (1) lack of clarity on the needs for the project (e.g., E-W, N-S travel, what trips?) and whether the alternatives address the needs; and (2) limiting alternatives considered to the project area (e.g., improvements on 99W), which may eliminate the best solutions.
- Bob Adams: OK with changes; no need to change colors.
- Tom Aufenthie: OK
- Susan Rychlick: OK
- Jon Reinmann: OK
- Ron Johnson: OK
- Dave Volz: OK with recommendation in the interest of keeping the process moving. He also provided the following summary of his comments in writing after the meeting:
 - I am appalled by the distinct favoritism shown toward Wilsonville, and the callousness or even vindictiveness toward Tualatin in the EMT recommendations. Three of the five GREEN options selected noted possible Wilsonville objections because this option might interfere with their planning. Meanwhile, the EMT adopted three options that appear to place the connector in or near heavily populated Tualatin subdivisions and schools.
 - I detect a very distinct sentiment in the SWG group that the traffic problem is a Tualatin problem, and, therefore, the connector properly belongs inside the city of Tualatin. However, both the freight issue and the through traffic issue are regional and state issues so blaming or punishing Tualatin should not be part of any proposed solution.
 - I do not want my comments to be construed as "anti-connector." In fact, I specifically stated that, if the traffic model demonstrates a need for the connector, I believe that there is an opportunity to optimize the benefits and minimize the adverse impacts of the connector by strategically placing at least the east portion of the connector in the area that has been zoned for industrial development and far enough south from the existing Tualatin residential subdivisions and schools.
 - I request that maps used in any connector siting decisions include all new subdivisions and schools in south Tualatin. Maps currently used in the handouts do not accurately reflect what is already built in south Tualatin.
- Ray Phelps: OK, not opposed to removing any of the red elements; continues to be concerned about impacts to I-5.
- Mike Feves: OK with eliminating red elements; recommends changing the color coding since green, yellow and red suggests "yes, maybe, no."
- Barbara Shields: Asked how environmental concerns would be addressed since most alternatives impact the refuge. Vaughn explained that environmental impacts would be addressed by the goals and objectives that rely on a "avoid, minimize, mitigate" strategy and will be analyzed. OK.

- Tom Sullivan: (comments provided in writing) I believe that no connector - whether a highway or a major arterial- should be built within the study area between 99W and I-5 for the reasons that follow. Therefore, with respect to the question that was presented to us at the SWG meeting, I believe that elements 1, 2, 4 and 7 should be relegated to the Red - No further consideration category.
 - Any benefits that might accrue from building a connector are greatly outweighed by the detriments. If you add up all the potential benefits that might accrue from such a connector, they will be far outweighed by the cost and the impact on the communities affected, the farms, the wildlife corridor, etc.
 - I complained in my last email to you that I thought that this entire project has been biased from the start in favor of a connector. The study area has been carefully selected to try and maximize the claimed benefits from a connector while ignoring (and in some cases, not even considering) the detriments. The wider the area that you consider the greater the potential negative impacts would be. The fact that Wilsonville's city center was not even included in the study area certainly supports that conclusion. In fact, one might cynically conclude that the only reason north Wilsonville was included in the study was because that is the only place that a connector road from 99W could hook up to I-5.

I think it is also worth mentioning that I consider the inclusion of element 7 as a complete sham; a way to try and avoid the otherwise apparent bias. There is no way on earth that any politician would ever vote to run that connector through Tualatin's residential communities. (Nor should they.)

- In addition, and most importantly from Wilsonville's perspective, all of the benefits from such a road would accrue primarily to Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood while the burden of such a road would fall almost exclusively on Wilsonville and the communities in between, not to mention the wildlife areas and farms.

Wilsonville has its own traffic problems and congestion. Building a connector might solve TTS's congestion problem but it will increase Wilsonville's problems exponentially.

Further, I-5, from south of Tualatin to the other side of the Willamette, is seriously congested during PM Peak hour. Elements 1,2 and 4 all require an additional interchange at, or within a mile of the Elligson Road interchange. Such a connector would likely funnel all of the east west traffic, as well as 99W traffic headed for Portland, or Portland traffic headed for the coast - most of which now use different routes, onto I-5 and into Wilsonville. How could that not significantly increase the already congested traffic on I-5. Ray Phelps, who represents the Wilsonville Chamber, has brought a picture to the SWG meeting on several occasions showing what I-5 looks like whenever there is an accident south or north of us - something that happens with increasing frequency. It is one giant parking lot.

- The only way you can justify a connector is by ignoring some of the objectives that we initially came up with.

This is simply another way of saying what I have already said. The major impacts that are being ignored are the increase in congestion on I-5, the

disruption to the Wilsonville transportation facility, and, of course, all of the negative impacts such a connector would have on the natural/wildlife corridor that has been so carefully preserved.

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4. Public comment

Tracy Erwig

Tracy asked if ten different roads could make up the connector project rather than a highway. Vaughn responded that she is correct.

Clark Eisert

Clark stated that he hopes that the committee does not take lightly the issue of condemning private property for a roadway. He explained that those who live near the corrections facility have dealt with many impacts already. The project should focus on right-of-way that is already publicly owned.

Final SWG comments

A SWG member noted that considering external impacts was important to the analysis. She continued that the project should learn from previous bad land use planning and look at the big picture to avoid leaving a mess on I-5 and Highway 99W. She asked what the process was to review the analysis and ask big picture questions. Vaughn explained that the group be reviewing the analysis as part of the alternatives analysis phase.

A SWG member asked Jef to clarify what the PSC would be asked to do at their next meeting. Jef told the group that the PSC would only be asked to approve removing the red options from further consideration and not to endorse the green and yellow options.

5. Close

The next SWG is scheduled for 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, May 9. The SWG will not meet in April.

Lawrence told the SWG that he would request that the consultant team revise the color-coding system with the approval of the EMT.