

**I-5 to 99W Connector Project SWG #3
6-8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1, 2005
Meeting Summary**



Location:

Sherwood Police Training Room
20495 SW Borchers Drive, Sherwood

SWG members in attendance:

Loretta Pickerell, 1000 Friends of Oregon
Elliott Eki, AAA Oregon
Tom Aufenthie, CPO 5 (unincorporated Washington County)
Mike Feves, Far West Association of Neighborhoods
Bill Shake, Friends of the Refuge
Jack Laverty, Oregon Trucking Association
Lynette DeVere, Sherwood Chamber
Dave Volz, Tualatin CCI
Bob Adams, Tualatin Chamber
Ron Johnson, Washington County Farm Bureau
Jon Reimann, Westside Economic Alliance
Debra Iguchi, Wilsonville CCI (alternate)

SWG members absent:

Adrian Emery, Sherwood CCI
Nick Storie, Metro CCI
Jerry Renfro, Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue
Ray Phelps, Wilsonville Chamber

Guests:

David Shettles
James Smiley
Stacey Rungay
John and Dorothy Alto
Tom Moes

Staff and consultants:

Vaughn Brown, Jeanne Lawson Associates
Kristin Hull, Jeanne Lawson Associates
Leslie Howell, Howell Consulting
Jef Kaiser, DEA
Mark Turpel, Metro
Barry Hennelly, Washington County
Michael Ray, ODOT
Rob Dixon, City of Sherwood

Mike McKillip, City of Tualatin

1. Welcome, meeting purpose and introductions- Vaughn Brown, JLA

Vaughn welcomed the group. Vaughn asked the new SWG member, Lynette DeVere from the Sherwood Chamber to introduce herself. A committee member requested that all materials provided at meetings be e-mailed as well. Vaughn explained that the SWG meeting was a continuation of the scoping process that the SWG began last time.

A committee member asked if the PSC was receiving reports on the SWG meetings and if the SWG would receive copies of the PSC meeting minutes. Vaughn explained that the PSC had not met since the first SWG meetings but that the PSC would receive regular reports on SWG progress. Vaughn stated that SWG members would receive PSC meeting summaries in their packets and could attend any PSC meeting to observe.

A committee member asked about why the list of topics covered in the RTP phase (referenced in the meeting summary) specifically listed “prime farmland” instead of just farmland. Staff explained that studying “prime farmland” is a federal requirement and that the impacts to general farmland would be covered under the land use topic. The committee adopted meeting #2 summary as amended by Tom Moes e-mail requesting a revision to the summary of the comment he provided.

Vaughn reviewed the open houses that were held on November 29 and 30. Staff had not had much time to review the results, but about 220 people attended the open houses. The feedback recorded on flip charts and on butcher paper was displayed on the walls. A complete meeting summary would be available at the next meeting.

Vaughn asked committee members who attended either of the open houses to share their impressions. Responses included:

- I noticed a high degree of skepticism about finding funding for a project and some skepticism about the project in general.
- I thought attendees had a genuine interest in learning about the project.
- There was lots of discussion about whether a new expressway was the solution to transportation problems in this area and about how a connector would affect congestion on I-5.
- There was discussion about “connecting a failed road to a failed road”.
- Attendees were focused on trying to absorb all the information.
- There was distrust about the process expressed.
- I heard discussion about growth in existing residential areas and how local traffic should be accommodated.
- Attendees were concerned about their neighborhoods.

A committee member asked how many people the project team expected. Vaughn responded that we planned for 1,000. A committee member suggested that more people may attend when specific routes are proposed. A committee member asked if online comments would be given the same weight as comments received at meetings. Vaughn

explained that online comments and those collected at the meeting will be given the same weight.

2. Purpose and Need Statement – Jef Kaiser, DEA

Jef explained that gathering input on the purpose and need statement from the public and the committee is an important part of scoping. Staff will help the SWG to consider all the feedback received at the open houses. He explained that it is important that the SWG provide feedback on the purpose and need and goals and objectives so that the drafts taken to the PSC have strong support. Jef reviewed the purpose and need guidelines. He explained that the goals and objectives are tools used to influence what kinds of solutions are considered and that goals are broader than objectives.

A committee member asked about the project's origins. Jef explained that the project was identified in the Regional Transportation Plan which is updated by Metro every three years. The Regional Transportation Plan is based on a study of transportation in the entire region. It identifies general projects that may require additional study like the I-5 to 99W Connector Project. Going back further, the Western Bypass Study selected a package of transportation improvements that included a connector. The project's purpose really comes out of RTP (and other local transportation plans') recognition that a connector is an important component of a regional transportation system.

Question: The study we're embarking on will meet federal guidelines. What about state and Metro guidelines?

Response: *The State of Oregon uses the same guidelines as the federal government. NEPA guidelines meet or exceed Metro and Washington County's requirements.*

Question: The RTP sounds very specific about constructing a four lane road. Do we have any flexibility?

Response: *Yes, the project has some flexibility about a solution but does not have unlimited latitude to ignore the RTP's recognition of the need for a connector.*

Question: How will decisions about using tolls to fund this project be made?

Response: *The RTP calls for tolling to be considered as part of the study, but it does not require that a tolling solution be selected. Things like cost effectiveness and other available funding will be studied and will be used to make that decision.*

Comment: Tolling should not drive the design and location or the prioritization of transportation projects.

Question: Does the RTP mandate a connector?

Response: *Mandate is not the right word. The RTP identifies a connector as a project that is needed to accommodate future growth.*

Question: Does the solution have to be a connector?

***Response:** The purpose statement should be broad enough to consider proposals other than a limited access expressway. Metro staff has recommended study of one alternative that includes everything but an expressway.*

3. Purpose and Need Statement discussion– SWG

The committee members suggested specific changes to the purpose and need statement in a round robin format.

Tom: Eliminate the second phrase in the purpose statement so that it reads “The purpose of the project is to address the problem of inadequate transportation facilities in the outer southwest quadrant of the Portland metropolitan area.”

Loretta: Replace the words “transportation facility” with “mobility” to broaden the purpose statement.

Ron: OK the way it is.

Elliot: OK the way it is.

Dave: Implies that the connector is needed which he is willing to live with.

Bill: OK. The study will always look at a no-build alternative as well.

Lynette: Good.

Mike: Agrees with the suggestions made by Loretta and Tom. We should look at local transportation problem.

Jack: OK.

Debra: Does not think that we have the data to know what the problem is. Agrees with Mike and Loretta.

Bob: OK.

Jon: OK with Tom’s suggestion.

Dave: Does not want to include Tom’s statement.

Loretta: Worried that the problem statement just implies that we want to make it easier for people to drive more miles.

Vaughn says that staff from the jurisdictions will review SWG input and share the results and updated draft at the next meeting.

The group then reviewed the need statements.

The committee made the following suggestions:

- Need statement #2 “There is inadequate connectivity in the state highway network for the outer southwest quadrant of the Portland metropolitan area.”
 - Broaden this statement to include multimodal connectivity.
 - Replace “connection” with “capacity”
- Need statement #3 “Freight mobility in the outer southwest quadrant of the Portland metropolitan area is constrained and inefficient due to the lack of effective access to the state highway system and significant congestion conflicts on existing arterials.”
 - Why limit the solution to freight problems to highways? Rail is another way to move freight.
 - Freight movement is constrained but is the problem limited access?
- Need statement #4 “Conflicts between through travel needs and local destination and access needs threaten the continued viability of the town centers in Sherwood, Tualatin and Tigard”
 - Change “viability” to economic viability.
 - Why is this included when it is obvious that these town centers are thriving?
- Need statement #5 “Rural land uses and farm-to-market roads south of Sherwood and north of Wilsonville are being adversely impacted by freight and regional travel”
 - Broaden this statement to include all rural roads, not just particular farm-to-market roads and not just in the geographic areas mentioned.
- Add a need statement that says that a lack of transportation choices is exacerbating congestion.

Comment: A leap of faith that each of the need statements can be supported is required.

Question: Can the committee add a feedback loop that would allow the needs to be revisited once data is available?

Response: *Yes. The project team will bring the purpose and need back for review as more data is available.*

4. Goals and objectives development

Vaughn asked committee members to look over the goals and objectives information the SWG generated at their first two meetings and the information from the open houses and to add anything that was missing. A complete transcription of all the feedback (SWG and public) will be provided at the next meeting.

5. Public comment

James Smiley

James asked what the study area represents. Staff explained that the study area was the area where the solution is expected to be located and that it was developed by considering transportation needs in the area.

He asked if the scope of the project is to locate a connector and if improvements to I-5 and 99W were on the table. Staff explained that impacts to I-5 and 99W would be considered as part of the study.

James said that if I-5 and 99W improvements are not on the table then the solution might be local.

Tom Sullivan

Tom stated that he was a member of the Western Bypass CAC. He referenced the definition of the problem and stated that the solution can't be considered in isolation. The study will need to consider the range of impacts from the narrow (community) to the broad (how we use gas and energy resources). He suggested that congestion may not be the real problem. The real problem may be that people drive too much. Maybe a new road should not be constructed to subsidize the trucking industry instead maybe freight rail should be made more viable. If our purpose is narrowed to only looking at roads then roads will be the only solution.

Tom Moes, Root Holdings

Tom began by asking if the maps show the industrial lands UGB expansion. Staff confirmed that they did. Tom stated that since the expansion was for industrial use, the study should look at the uses in those locations. He stated that he was impressed by the clarity of the information provided at the open house. He suggested amending the purpose statement to include access and mobility. He told the committee that the population of Washington County is expected to reach 900,000 in the next 30 years which makes this problem regional, not local. He asked if there were any incentives to come up with a solution in less than four years.

6. Next steps and close

Vaughn shared Ray Phelps' written comments. Ray requested that the committee review data that supports the purpose and need, specifically in reference to where trips are coming from and going to. The group confirmed that his concern was raised in the earlier purpose and need discussion.

A committee member re-stated that the SWG is taking the need statements at face value and will need to see the data to back-up the assertions.

Vaughn reminded the SWG that there will be two meetings in January (January 5 and 19).