



## Task Force Meeting #16

**ATTENDEES:** Warren Bednarz/Downtown Business, Betsy Belshaw/Parks, Russ Beaton/Land Use, Tom Clark/West Salem businesses, Bob Cortright/DLCD, Scott Erickson/West Salem residents, Leon Fischer/Freight, Glenn Gross/City of Salem Community Development, Glen Hadley/Salem-Keizer Transit District, Fred Harris/North Salem Business Association, Mark Bechtel/City of Salem Public Works, Mike Jaffe/SKATS, Sam Litke/City of Keizer, Mike Karnosh/Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Austin McGuigan/Polk County Community Development Director, Doug Parrow/BTA, Tim Potter/ODOT, Lorraine Pullman/Grant Neighborhood, Cindy Schmitt/Marion County Public Works, Darlene Strozut/Highland Neighborhood

**UNABLE TO ATTEND:** Mark Brown/Natural Resources, Ismael Perez/Hispanic interest

**STAFF PARTICIPANTS:** Dan Fricke/ODOT, Julie Warncke/City of Salem, Rod Thompson/ODOT, Tim Burkhardt/CH2M HILL, Ed Chamberland/W & H Pacific, Linda Girard/ CH2M HILL, Marcy Schwartz/CH2M HILL, Dave Simmons/CH2M HILL

**GUESTS:** Edna and John Annand/Highland Neighborhood, Tom Stoops/Highland Neighborhood, Bill Drumheller/Highland Neighborhood, Erik Havig/ODOT Region 2, Gary Obery/Highland Neighborhood, Kate Tarter/City of Salem Councilor Ward 5, Don Ferguson/Highland Neighborhood, Moya McKeehan/Highland Neighborhood, Eunice Kim/Statesman Journal

**DATE:** December 12, 2007

## Welcome and Agenda Review

Tim Burkhardt welcomed the group. He then reviewed the agenda and meeting materials, including the November 8 and 14 open house meeting summary, the summary of comments received by email and postal mail, the online survey results, and copy of the PowerPoint presentation.

## Public Comment

Tim invited the public audience to introduce themselves and any organizational affiliation and then address the group if they had any comments. Gary Obery, resident of the Highland Neighborhood, said he would like a fuller discussion of no build in the EIS and that he hoped the Task Force would avoid alternatives that bisect the northern residential parts of the city.

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## Open House Summary

Tim referred the group to the open house summary and asked for comments and impressions from Task Force members who had attended. Mark Becktel observed that the general population was polite and inquisitive. He said he would have expected more anger and felt the events were very productive. Russ Beaton commended the staff on doing a great job and felt that the attendees tried hard to make constructive comments. Tim said that staff received comments on both extremes of the choices. Darlene Strozut also complimented the staff on the meeting materials and their responses to questions. She did caution, however, that as we go forward the public may not be so polite.

Betsy Belshaw asked about whatever had happened to the Beltline study. Staff responded that the current study is a refinement study of that previous project area and that a south bridge could be considered once a north bridge has been determined. Betsy asked if we're defeating the Beltline purpose and Mike Jaffe responded that needs have varied over the years, resulting in different locations for a bridge.

## Alternatives Narrowing

Tim reported that progress had been made since the last Task force meeting on the "Low Build" concept and the project team was able to look beyond mobility to capture a range of costs and benefits in the EIS. The team was also able to establish more clarity on regulatory issues - Goal Exception and 4(f). The team is continuing to work out details with the transit district and SKATS on transit and roadway management (TSM/TDM).

Tim then explained that the Task Force would have a two part decision to make on the alternatives for the EIS:

- Performance and cost spectrum and categories of alternatives. Tim said that within the spectrum we will look beyond the mobility standard to enable us to continue to study, in the EIS, some of the "low end" concepts rather than discarding them at this point in the process. Teal light (widening the existing bridges) would, therefore, be included in the study and would be considered the low build.
- How do we fill the categories (which alternatives)?

Tim asked the group if they agreed with the four categories of alternatives, including the addition of the existing bridge category and a new bridge (only) category. Tim Potter commented that this would also help with the phasing process and asked if we know what the v/c ratio for a no build is. Simmons responded that it is probably 1.3 - 1.4. Cindy Schmitt expressed concern that this approach might expand the scope of work order to do the EIS and wondered if we can afford it. Staff responded that this allows us a broader range of alternatives cost wise and it would be a mistake not to study them. Fred Harris observed that it seems more cost effective to study them all now and this process allows for a "hard look." And Bob Cortright said that this process enables us to see what we can do for less money. He also suggested that column "A" be renamed "Improvements to existing bridge" to reduce confusion and asked if we have the right component parts to Teal light.

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Doug Parrow said that other than the no build, he sees no alternative that doesn't have a negative affect on bikes/pedestrians and the wider lanes on Wallace are particularly negative. Wallace Road changes cut the community in half! Warren Bednarz referred to Mission which is divided with a landscape strip and said that we need to make sure that whatever we do for bike/peds it needs to be better than the situation is now. He feels some things can be done to mitigate impacts to bike/peds although Doug said it was hard for him to see how the impacts of wider lanes, etc., can be mitigated. Glen Hadley pointed out that the double turn lanes are negative to public transportation as well and maybe some mitigation could be achieved by looking at bus routings. Cindy noted that dual lefts don't have the same affect on transit as dual rights.

Tim asked for Task Force agreement on the four categories of alternatives and all members present, with the exception of three who abstained, concurred with the project team's recommendation.

The group then moved on to a discussion about narrowing down the alternatives within the categories. The project team suggested that they (1) eliminate those that the Task Force and Oversight Team preliminarily agreed to remove (or almost agreed to remove) and (2) eliminate those that are fatally flawed from a regulatory perspective - in this case, Section 4(f) - parks impacts (Green + Red) - based on recent guidance. Glen Gross and others pointed out that it is extremely important to have documentation of this and that FHWA should provide written documentation of why Green + Red is fatally flawed. Tim Potter asked why the Orange + Red concept had not been eliminated by the Oversight Team and Tim Burkhardt said it was "teetering on the brink."

Tim Burkhardt then explained the staff recommendations. He said that White received the strongest support from the Task force, Oversight Team, and was the most common preference at open houses. He said that staff recommends White over Pink and Orange because the three have similar function but White performs better than Orange and includes a direct ramp connection which Pink does not. Warren asked if it was too late to discuss aligning White with Orchard Heights instead of Hope and Doug noted that this might help Wallace Road. Mark added that he didn't think tying it with Hope made sense. Russ said he has developed a new appreciation of the West Salem Heights to Portland connection which was emphasized in open house comments.

Tim then explained staff reasoning behind keeping the Yellow alternatives:

- Urban Growth Boundary issue
  - Without Green, Yellow is unique - only potentially viable new bridge option that could be considered entirely within the UGB (assuming a minor UGB amendment)
  - To justify a new bridge that goes outside the UGB, we need detailed study of at least one new bridge that is *within* the UGB
- Section 4(f)
  - If Yellow is fatally flawed on 4(f), then justifying a goal exception for White is easier - but we must first conduct a detailed Section 4(f) evaluation to document this

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Mark asked if the bridge corridor doesn't allow access outside the UGB is it really an issue? Bob said the burden of proof may not be as strenuous if it is just outside but that the documentation must still occur. Mike Karnosh said it looked like the reasons for keeping Yellow alive were similar to Green and Glenn Gross noted that this underscores the importance of documentation. Lorraine Pullman said that Yellow alignment wouldn't eliminate as much affordable housing or impact neighborhoods as severely. Mark noted that Yellow goes across the top of the park and could be as useless an alignment as Green – it seems as flawed as Green. Tim said that the project team would continue to look at the 4(f) issues to clarify the differences between Green and Yellow. Tim said that the UGB advice the project team had received was that Yellow is close enough to the UGB that it would probably need to be considered as if it were within the UGB. Bob noted that the case probably could be made for a goal exception to be granted.

## Decision

The Task Force agreed to recommend, with one abstention, that Teal Light (widening the existing bridges), White only, Yellow only, White, Yellow, White + Red (including "light" option) and Yellow + Red be advanced for further study in the EIS. There was also an interest expressed by some members in a hybrid yellow/white on the west side and the team may want to study that further. Doug Parrow noted that if we do think about tolls as a funding option, what effect would that have on design options? Every ramp would have to have a toll booth and it seems funding strategy would affect design. Staff indicated that with current automated tolling technology that less and less physical infrastructure was needed and although this was a consideration it was not critical to determine this now.

## Public Comment

Sam Skillern, Co-Chair of the Grant Neighborhood, said his Neighborhood Association met recently and voted unanimously to oppose siting a bridge at Market-Gaines, Hood-Shipping, or Academy Streets. He said while his Association is sympathetic to West Salem's transportation woes, they don't believe those should impact east side neighborhoods. He believes we need to find other solutions and referred to Vision 2020 and its depiction of a vibrant downtown. This needs to be symbiotic with a bridge crossing (i.e. no huge arterials). He also said that he hopes the EIS fully evaluates the perspectives of those not in cars. Bike/peds/transit needs should be robustly discussed. Mr. Skillern submitted a letter from the Neighborhood Association which is attached at the end of the meeting notes.

## Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. The next meeting has been scheduled for January 16<sup>th</sup>. The Task Force still needs to discuss bridge types and financing and also some refinements to TSM/TDM after which the EIS will be prepared, followed by public hearings and a comment period.



December 12, 2007

Salem River Crossing Task Force

RE: Public Input on proposed bridges

Dear SRC Task Force:

The Grant Neighborhood is a major stakeholder in the process now under way to examine the various options for bridging the Willamette River to alleviate current (and future) transportation pressures in Salem. We are grateful to be represented on the SRC Task Force; moreover many of our residents and Neighborhood Association board members have attended presentations, open houses and task-force meetings to listen and learn. We are well-informed and will continue to be involved in the process.

At the November 9, 2007 General Meeting of the Grant Neighborhood Association, the members discussed the Salem River Crossing Task Force's proposals for a new bridge over the Willamette River. The members voted on the following motion, which was carried on a vote of 29 in favor, -0- opposed.:

***"The Grant Neighborhood go on record as adamantly opposed to siting the bridge at Market-Gaines, Hood-Shipping, or Academy Streets and that we reserve judgement on the other proposed sites. Also, we have no positive support for a specific site at this time."***

Grant Neighborhood is not an anti-development or "NIMBY" community. We have worked for years with the City, private developers, business and agencies to revitalize an area that was given up for dead by most of our community. Yes, our area has seen hard times and many challenges. But we are overcoming those challenges and we believe we live in the best neighborhood in town. We are very sympathetic to the traffic woes our West Salem neighbors are experiencing. We accept that the east side of the river will need to be a partner in the solution to those traffic woes. And yet:

The traffic problems that affect the quality of life for one part of town can never be solved by degrading the quality of life of another part of town. History has shown that putting freeways and major arterials through older, inner-city neighborhoods creates economic, social and infrastructural damage that far outweigh the transportation conveniences, and which take decades to reverse.

There are far better alternatives than crossing the Willamette River into established neighborhoods. Employers, schools, the North Downtown Plan, and other positives assets in our north neighborhoods will be adversely affected. We look forward to continuing the dialogue and seeking the highest and best solution for all parties and our community.

Sam Skillern, Co-Chair