

Decision-Making Structure and Process

This memo, which was adopted by the Oversight Team during their September 27, 2006 meeting, describes the decision-making structure and process for delivering the Salem River Crossing project.

Underlying Assumptions

The Oregon Department of Transportation and City of Salem are committed to an approach that:

- Delivers a “transparent” alternatives analysis and environmental review process that provides ongoing, inclusive, and meaningful two-way communication between the project team and the public.
- Meets the regulatory requirements and intent associated with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); the Department of Transportation Order on Environmental Justice (EJ); and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Meets Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- Encourages active participation of stakeholders—those agencies, interest groups, and individuals with particular “stakes” in the outcome of the project—in accordance with the FHWA Context Sensitive Solutions guidance.
- Results in completion of the NEPA process by Spring 2009.

A key element of the approach is a structured decision-making process and well-defined decision-making organization. The aim of a structured decision process is to create a logical path through a complicated project by establishing major decision points. Thorough and thoughtful consideration of issues at each decision point by all of the project stakeholder groups helps to ensure quality decisions that will not have to be revisited later in the project. The aim is to avoid going “back to square one” because something of significance has been omitted or improperly addressed. Structuring the process in this way enables the project team to explain to stakeholders where we are in the process, what we have accomplished, and what lies ahead. The clear identification of decision points creates an expectation in stakeholder groups for meeting the deadlines and staying on schedule as a way to avoid more and more meetings.

Defining the decision structure—groups that will be involved and how they will participate—provides a “level playing field” for all stakeholders and answers questions typically asked by stakeholders:

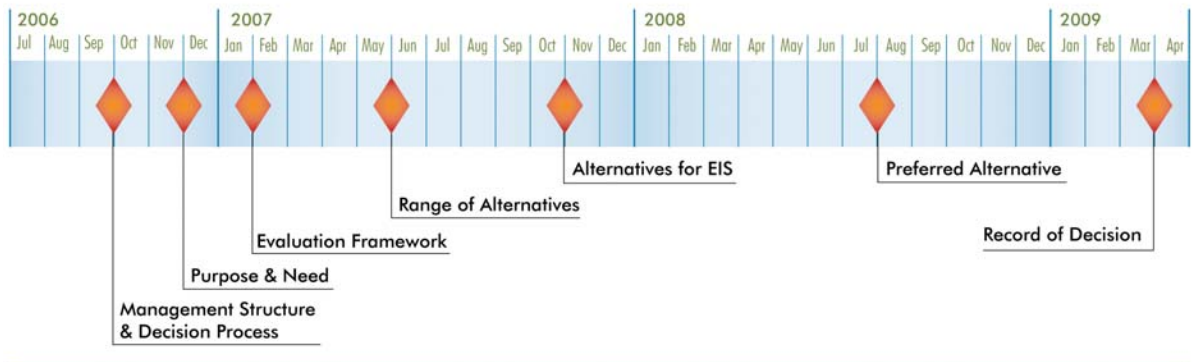
- Who will make the decisions?
- How can I influence the decisions?
- When will I have an opportunity to participate?
- Who will consider my input?

Proposed Decision Process

The decision process for the Salem River Crossing project will be organized into the following seven decision points as shown on Figure 1 and described below:

- Management Structure and Decision Process
- Purpose and Need
- Evaluation Framework
- Range of Alternatives
- Alternatives for EIS
- Preferred Alternative
- Record of Decision

DECISION MILESTONES



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FIGURE 1
Decision Milestones

Management Structure and Decision Process

This first decision step ensures agreement about the process, and the roles, responsibilities, and membership of the various participating groups.

Purpose and Need

The second decision step establishes the need for the project and defines the transportation problems the project is expected to address.

Evaluation Framework

The third decision step creates a tool to assist in evaluating alternatives. The evaluation framework will set criteria and quantitative performance measures for gauging the effectiveness of alternatives – how well they solve the identified problems and how well they perform against the broad range of stakeholder values.

Range of Alternatives

The fourth point in the decision process determines the range of alternatives to be considered. At this point, all alternatives or solutions that could potentially solve the

identified problem are considered. The aim is to ensure stakeholders have been consulted and all of their ideas get put “on the table”.

Alternatives Screening

The fifth decision point applies the evaluation criteria (established in decision point three) to the alternatives (developed in decision point four), screening out those that do not meet the minimum requirements or the project Purpose and Need. A small number of alternatives are selected for detailed evaluation in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Preferred Alternative

In the sixth decision point, data developed for the draft EIS is used to re-evaluate the remaining alternatives against the evaluation criteria. A locally preferred alternative is then selected based on the evaluation results and input from public and agency stakeholders.

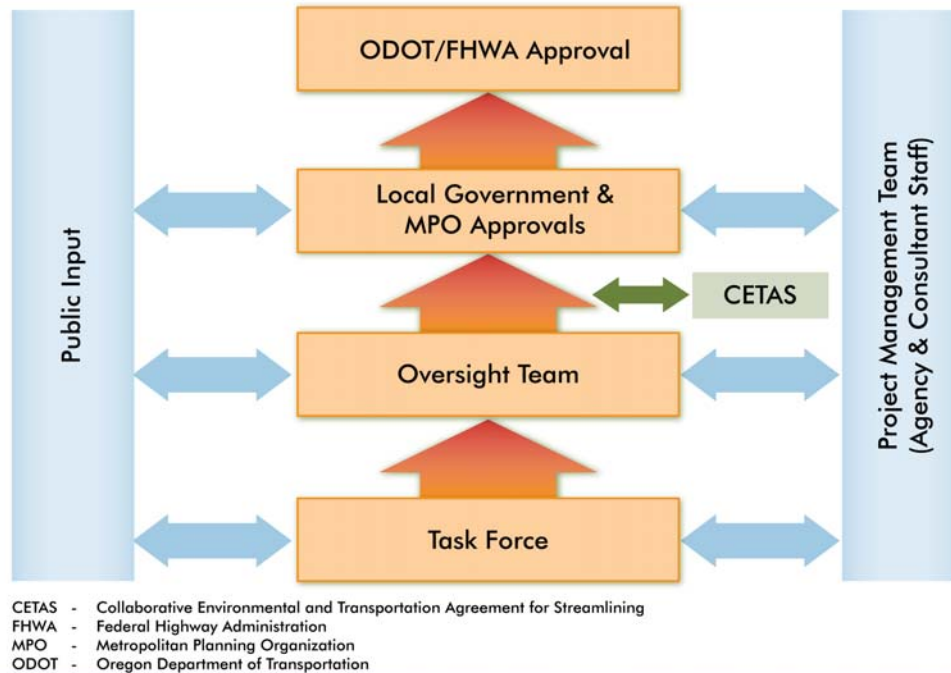
Record of Decision

The seventh decision point is FHWA’s approval of the Environmental Impact Statement, including the preferred alternative. All local land use actions must be complete by this time and the funding and mitigation plans must be in place.

Proposed Decision-Making Structure

The proposed decision-making structure for the Salem River Crossing Project is shown on Figure 2. The composition, roles, and responsibilities of each group are described below.

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE



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FIGURE 2
Decision-Making Structure

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

The FHWA is the lead agency for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process that governs proposed actions requiring federal highway funding, permits, or approvals. FHWA will sign the Final Environmental Impact Statement and approve the Record of Decision.

Local Elected Officials

The Oversight Team (see below) will make all interim decisions during the project. Elected officials of affected jurisdictions will be briefed as need or upon request. The elected officials will approve the preferred alternative.

Collaborative Environmental and Transportation Agreement for Streamlining (CETAS)

CETAS has been established to coordinate and streamline the regulatory reviews and permitting functions of the participating agencies. Members include representatives from key federal and state agencies responsible for protecting the region's air, water, fish and wildlife, and cultural and land use resources. This committee must formally concur on Salem River Crossing decisions related to Purpose and Need, Evaluation Framework, Range of Alternatives and Preferred Alternative.

Oversight Team

The Oversight Team (OT) includes elected or appointed officials of local agencies and jurisdictions with regulatory responsibility for or strong interest in the project.

Responsibilities of the OT include:

- Set the policy framework for the project.
- Represent the interests of their agencies or jurisdictions in group deliberations.
- Communicate project progress to their fellow elected or appointed officials, and to their constituents.
- Prepare for and participate in approximately 10 2-hour meetings between September 2006 and December 2008
- Review recommendations from the Task Force and other background materials and make decisions at the six decision points in the project.

Members of the OT will represent their organizations in making the first five of these decisions. For the sixth decision point (Preferred Alternative), the OT will recommend a preferred alternative to the Polk and Marion County Boards, Salem City Council, and SKATS for formal approval.

The group will be comprised of:

- Sam Brentano, Marion County, County Commissioner
- Lloyd Chapman, Salem-Keizer Transit District, Board Chair
- Dan Clem, City of Salem, City Councilor
- Dave Cox, FHWA, Division Administrator (non-voting member)
- Tom Ritchey, Polk County, County Commissioner
- Jeff Scheick, ODOT, Region Manager
- Kathy Clark, City of Keizer

Task Force

The Task Force (TF) will provide a balanced representation of stakeholder interests, affected communities, and geographic areas as well as a communication link with those interests and communities. Members will include leaders of neighborhoods on both sides of the river as well as representatives of local and regional business groups and advocates for different bridge user groups, including commuters, freight and transit users, pedestrians and bicyclists. Members will be appointed by ODOT and the City of Salem. Responsibilities of the TF members include:

- Represent their constituents' perspectives during group deliberations
- Communicate project progress with their constituents
- Prepare for and participate in approximately 16 3-hour meetings between October 2006 and December 2008
- Attend four public outreach events between fall of 2006 and December 2008

- Working to develop consensus recommendations to the OT at each step in the decision process

The TF members will include representatives of the following organizations/interest groups:

Agencies:

- Tim Potter, ODOT
- Bob Cortright, Department of Land Conservation and Development
- Mike Jaffe, Mid-Willamete Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG)/Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS)
- Aaron Geisler, Polk County Public Works
- Cindy Schmitt, Marion County Public Works
- Mark Bechtel, City of Salem Public Works
- Glenn Gross, City of Salem Community Development
- Chris Eppley, City of Keizer
- Glen Hadley, Salem-Keizer Transit District

Neighborhoods and Civic:

- Scott Erickson, Chair of West Salem Neighborhood Association
- Darlene Strozut, Highland Neighborhood Association Board Member
- Lorraine Pullman, Grant Neighborhood Association Board Member
- Tom Clark, West Salem Business

Interest Groups:

- Warren Bednarz, BAR Industries (Metro Area/Downtown Business)
- Doug Parrow, Bicycle Transportation Alliance
- Russell Beaton, PhD., Retired (Land Use Interest)
- Mark Brown, Bureau of Land Management (Natural Resource Interest)
- Leon Fisher, Siletz Trucking (Freight Interest)
- Mitch Teal, Commercial Investment Associates (Economic Development Interest)
- Ismael Perez, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Betsey Belshaw, (Parks Interest)

Project Management Team

The Project Management Team (PMT) will be comprised of ODOT, City of Salem and consultant project managers, with participation from other key staff resources from these agencies and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments as needed. The PMT's responsibilities include:

- Management of project scope, schedule and budget
- Direction, production, and quality assurance of technical and public/agency involvement work
- Assurance of an open, transparent process that incorporates full consideration of public input
- Staff support to the OT and TF

PMT members include:

- Dan Fricke, ODOT
- Julie Warncke, City of Salem
- Rod Thompson, ODOT
- Dave Simmons, CH2M HILL
- Marcy Schwartz, CH2M HILL
- Tim Burkhardt, CH2M HILL
- Jay McRae, CH2M HILL

Public Involvement

Public outreach prior to each of the project decision points will be used to provide the public with meaningful opportunities to affect project outcomes. People will be provided an opportunity to comment on issues that will shortly be decided, so it should be easy to understand why it is important to respond and to believe the input will matter.

Planned outreach activities will include a mailing list that will be developed and updated periodically. It will include all those who participated in previous related studies, as well as those who indicate interest in the current project. A series of newsletters will provide updates on project progress to those on the mailing list. Public open houses and workshops, an interactive project website, on-line surveys, and a speakers' bureau will provide opportunities for information exchange. Specifically, interested persons will be asked to provide input on the:

- Purpose and need for the project
- Alternatives evaluation criteria
- Alternatives to be considered
- Alternatives to be forwarded for detailed analysis in the Draft EIS
- Preferred alternative

Public input will be actively considered by the TF in making recommendations at each decision point. The public also will have opportunities to provide input to decision-makers throughout the project. Documentation of the public involvement process will be provided in a technical report, including discussion of ways public input influenced the project outcome.