



## Oversight Team Meeting Summary

ATTENDEES:	Cathy Clark/ Keizer City Councilor	Lisa Nell/ODOT Region 2	Dan Clem/ Salem City Councilor
	Emily Lawton/ FHWA	Craig Pope/ Polk County Commissioner	Bob Krebs/Salem Area Mass Transit District, Board of Directors
	Sam Brentano/ Marion County Commissioner		
STAFF PARTICIPANTS:	Dan Fricke/ODOT	Mike Jaffe/Mid- Willamette Valley Council of Governments	Michael Hoffmann/CH2M HILL
	Rod Thompson/ODOT		Brandy
	Julie Warncke/City of Salem	Dave Simmons/CH2M HILL	Steffen/CH2M HILL
GUESTS:	<b>Public:</b> Scott Bassett; Jim Scheppke; Peter Wong/Statesman Journal; Douglas Kirkpatrick; Russ Beaton/Task Force Member; Ed Regnier; Mike Erdmann/Home Builders Association; Ed Chamberland/DEA; Calvin Larwood/WH Pacific		
	<b>Agency representatives:</b> Steve Dickey/Salem Area Mass Transit District; Alan Fox/ODOT; Krista McDowell/Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO)		
DATE:	Thursday, October 31, 2013 Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments Office		

## Introduction

Dave Simmons welcomed the group and asked the Oversight Team (OT) members to introduce themselves. He reviewed the agenda, mentioning that the materials from this meeting would be added to the website by the morning of November 1. Dave noted that the purpose of the meeting was to understand the Salem Alternative, as it was refined by the project team to be at a comparable level with Alternative 4D.

There were no changes to the July 31, 2013 meeting summary.

## Statements from the public in attendance

Dave asked the public in attendance to introduce themselves and to keep their statements brief to ensure that everyone had a chance to speak within the allotted timeframe. He also added that there would be time for public comments at the end of the meeting.

- ◆ **Scott Bassett:** Mr. Bassett wanted to recognize where the project is now and the endurance of the group and staff. He said if there was a good option then a bridge would have been identified previously and that we are now five years into the project with a tenth bridge option and it's changed so much since the Salem Council recommended it- each time it is revised it creates more problems and it will be interesting to see the impacts of the current changes.

## Findings of Salem Alternative analysis

Dave said that the project team would walk through the alternative from the west to the east, explaining how it has been refined since forwarded for analysis in July. The alternative was refined to bring it from lines on a map to a level of operational detail that could be compared to Alternative 4D.

### Alternative details and traffic operations

Dave stepped through the alternative.

#### Marine Drive/Highway 22 connection

When the Marine Drive-Highway 22 connection ramps are installed, the existing Rosemont Avenue westbound exit-ramp would be closed. This closure would be done for safety reasons – the existence of both a Marine Drive-to-Highway 22 ramp and a westbound Rosemont exit-ramp at its current location would result in undesirable weaving conditions; the potential for conflict would occur during all periods of the day, but would likely be more severe during the off-peak periods when speeds are higher. With the closure of the Rosemont Avenue exit-ramp, it is forecasted that former Rosemont Avenue-bound traffic wishing to access West Salem neighborhoods would shift to the Wallace Road exit (either to access Edgewater Street or to continue north on Wallace Road) or would continue west on Highway 22 to Rosewood Drive, College Drive, or Doaks Ferry Road. The eastbound on-ramp from Rosemont Avenue to Highway 22 would continue to function as it does today, but would not have access to the eastbound ramps exiting to northbound Marine Drive.

- ◆ **Dan Clem:** So the traffic that would have used Rosemont exit will now mostly use Wallace exit?
  - **Dave:** Yes, that is correct – about 2/3 will use Wallace ramp exit (either continuing north on Wallace or continuing west on Edgewater) and 1/3 will continue on Highway 22. However, since there are many access issues on Highway 22 there is a greater need for additional study in an Expressway Management plan that exceeds the extent of this project. However, closing the Rosemont exit would reduce weaving and safety concerns while still allowing traffic to access West Salem.

- ◆ **Dan Clem:** Would the Salem Alternative rebuild Edgewater Street?
  - **Julie Warncke:** The Regional Transportation System Plan (TSP) and the City's TSP assume that the Wallace Road exit from the Marion Street Bridge will have two lanes and that the first few blocks of Edgewater Street would also have two lanes and then drop to one lane. It is anticipated that this would handle traffic at acceptable levels. The Edgewater Street modifications would happen with or without a new bridge.
- ◆ **Cathy Clark:** Will the Rosemont exit be part of a separate study or will it be in the FEIS? Are these concerns at Rosemont specific to this alternative or are they in every alternative?
  - **Dave:** The project team tried to separate the issue of access to Highway 22 from West Salem from this project, since this needs to be handled in a more holistic way through an Expressway Management Plan. This is an issue for all of the alternatives, but the other alternatives had more of an impact to the Edgewater district than the Salem Alternative does.
  - **Julie:** For the purposes of the Salem Alternative in the EIS the system could work with Rosemont closed; it's not ideal but it works.
- ◆ **Sam Brentano:** Couldn't you widen Highway 22 to the north to reduce the cost?
  - **Dave:** Yes, you could expand to Edgewater to the north and it would reduce cost because it would lessen the amount of structure, but it would have impacts into the Edgewater district.
  - **Julie:** You could close the Rosemont on-ramp to Highway 22, which would shorten the eastbound ramp to Marine Drive and that would reduce the cost.
  - **Dave:** It is safest to have the conservative option, the longer ramp, in the EIS because you could always shorten it during design/construction as possible.
- ◆ **Dan Clem:** Did you look at the Eola Ramp?
  - **Dave:** The project team did talk about moving the traffic to Eola, but the best course of action is not to do this in a piece-meal fashion but do a complete study for the whole section of Highway 22.
- ◆ **Dan Clem:** What about the ramp on the eastbound direction. This wasn't in the City's drawings.
  - **Dave:** This eastbound off-ramp to Marine Drive along the riverbank is similar to the other alternatives we've examined. It needs to be extended farther back before the Rosemont on-ramp so that there aren't safety concerns created by traffic merging across multiple travel lanes to get onto Marine Drive. If the expressway management plan determines that both the Rosemont exit and entrance ramp should be closed, the ramp from Highway 22 to Marine Drive could be about half the length.

- ◆ **Dan Clem:** What about people wanting to go from Rosemont to Marine Drive via the Highway 22 ramp connection?
  - **Dave:** The model shows that this would not be a common movement; instead most people would use surface streets to get onto Marine Drive.

## Marine Drive

Marine Drive would be constructed at grade from River Bend Road in the north to Glen Creek Road in the south, with a connection to Highway 22 south of Glen Creek Road via elevated fly-over ramps. The proposed alignment of Marine Drive, as well as all new proposed roadway connections from Marine Drive to Wallace Road, is consistent with the Salem Transportation System Plan (TSP).

Marine Drive would contain one through-lane in each direction of travel (and a center turn lane) and would be situated at-grade between River Bend Road and Glen Creek Road, where the roadway would then ramp up and fly over the Union Street Pedestrian Path, the Marion Street Bridge exit ramp, and Wallace Road before descending back to grade near its connection with Highway 22. Eastbound Highway 22 would need to be widened out onto the riverbank (not into the river itself) to allow for the installation of the flyover ramp from Highway 22 to Marine Drive; including flying up and over the Center Street Bridge on-ramp and the Union Street Pedestrian Path.

The segment of Marine Drive between the Hope Avenue Extension and River Bend Road would include a connection to existing Harritt Drive. South of the Hope Avenue Extension, a new roadway would be built between Marine Drive and Wallace Road (“Beckett Street”) as well as between Marine Drive and the Cameo Street/5<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection (“5<sup>th</sup> Avenue”). There would be direct access connections provided to Marine Drive from Cameo Street and Taybin Road. The City proposes to operate the intersections of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Cameo Street, and Taybin Road as right-in/right-out in order to reduce traffic conflicts. There would be a new full intersection at Marine Drive and Glen Creek Road (at the entrance to Wallace Marine Park).

- ◆ **Dan Clem:** How is the widening of Wallace different than Alternative 4D?
  - **Dave:** It is similar but less of Wallace is widened – it is widened at the intersections of Hope and Orchard Heights to accommodate the increased traffic from the bridge.
- ◆ **Cathy Clark:** There are a lot of new connections to Marine Drive. I’m concerned that it’s not an expressway with minimal turning movements, which is what the Keizer City Council wants.
  - **Dave:** Right now Marine Drive is a designated collector and these are all planned street connections in Salem’s TSP. The project team is recommending that the City change the classification to a minor arterial to reflect the function anticipated and to allow the City to restrict the number of access points onto Marine Drive.
  - **Julie:** Most of the streets onto Marine would have right in/right out turns only, with a middle barrier for safety concerns. Collectors allow driveways

onto the street, so until the classification is changed to arterial they are allowed. The city is balancing the amount of access onto Marine Drive.

- ◆ **Dan Clem:** City Council doesn't want driveway access either, just street access to Marine Drive.
- ◆ **Cathy Clark:** Those streets can funnel traffic into Marine Drive and Wallace Road for functional use. The concern is to have Marine Drive function as an expressway for through traffic. If it's local only then the existing bridges are doing fine for that purpose.

### Bridgehead and Wallace Road

The west side bridgehead approaches would combine into a single roadway at the intersection with Marine Drive (which would be constructed as part of the Salem Alternative). This roadway ("Hope Avenue Extension") would then continue to the Wallace Road intersection at Hope Avenue. The Wallace Road/Hope Avenue intersection would be widened to accommodate the additional traffic traveling to and from the new bridge. There would also be a widening of the Wallace Road/Orchard Heights Road intersection to accommodate increased traffic volumes, including widening along Wallace Road between Taybin Road and Narcissus Court to accommodate the additional turn lanes; Orchard Heights Road would remain in its current alignment.

- ◆ **Cathy Clark:** Another big issue is bike and pedestrian facilities along Marine Drive; concerned about these facilities interacting with freight through-traffic. Is there an opportunity to buffer bikes/pedestrians or provide neighborhood access or cut-throughs for providing increased options for bikes/pedestrians?
  - **Julie:** There will be access via Hope and Wallace and we can look into creating cut-through opportunities in the future.
- ◆ **Dan Clem:** If the Hope and Marine intersection were wider would that improve the v/c ratio (traffic operations)? Is it a trade-off between street width and traffic congestion?
  - **Dave:** Yes, the Salem Alternative has a smaller bridge than Alternative 4D and it eliminated the free flow connections/ramps that were in 4D to efficiently move traffic onto Highway 22. Since we removed those ramps the traffic congestion has increased.

### Crossing location and bridge description

The Salem Alternative would have the same crossing point as all the Alternative 4 crossings shown in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS). It would connect to Hope Avenue at Wallace Road on the west, cross Wallace Marine Park at its northern tip, cross the Willamette River and McLane Island, cross over a realigned Front Street, and connect to Pine and Hickory Streets at Commercial Street on the east. The bridge could be a single structure or two side-by-side structures.

The new bridge would have two lanes traveling east and two lanes traveling west. The existing Center Street and Marion Street Bridges would remain in service, without

modification. The new bridge would include bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The final bridge cross-section and design, including the arrangement of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, would be determined during the Final EIS process. In order to ensure adequate right-of-way to accommodate all modes, the cross-section assumes, in each direction, two twelve-foot wide travel lanes, a ten-foot-wide raised sidewalk facility separated from the paved roadway by a barrier, and ten-foot-wide shoulder (eight-foot lane plus two feet of shy distance) adjacent to the far right travel lane.

### Eastside bridgehead and distribution network

This subsection describes the Salem Alternative on the east side of the new bridgehead and on the road network east of the Willamette River.

The Salem Alternative new bridge would have an eastbound connection at Commercial Street (via an exit ramp aligned with Pine Street) and a westbound connection (via an entrance ramp aligned with Hickory Street). Entrance and exit ramps would connect at-grade (east of Front Street) to a proposed short Pine Street/Hickory Street couplet. This couplet would be only two blocks in length, extending from the bridge ramps to Liberty Street, including their respective intersections with Commercial Street. Bridge access to and from Salem Parkway would be via the existing north-south Commercial/Liberty couplet. The new bridge would also be accessible from the north from River Road (via Commercial Street).

A portion of Front Street would be reconstructed closer to the river in the segment between Tryon Street and Columbia Street to maintain Front Street's north-south connectivity, below the bridge ramps. The remnant segments of Front Street in this area would allow access to existing businesses (on both sides of the bridge approaches). The former segment of Front Street below the bridge approaches would be closed to vehicles.

- ◆ **Dan Clem:** I'm wondering if we can refine the bike/pedestrian access along Front Street and increase the free flow movement of cars heading over the bridge. I want to make sure that the westbound traffic lights are timed to reduce congestion.
  - Dave: These are refinement pieces that we can discuss if the Oversight Team selects the Salem Alternative as the locally preferred alternative and that can all be captured in the Final EIS. While there are a lot of pieces to the eastside traffic movement, the project team was trying to respect the City's request to reduce the intrusion of traffic into the eastside neighborhoods. Traffic congestion could be improved in the future with changes to the signal phases and striping or even extending the couplet further east to 5<sup>th</sup> Street or Broadway; all changes that could happen if congestion is a problem.
  - Julie: The main reason we are not proposing these modifications is because the City Council directed that the Salem Alternative should insulate the neighborhood from traffic intrusions.

### Downtown traffic operations

The traffic operations in the downtown core would be about the same on Center/Commercial for the Salem Alternative and Alternative 4D. On Marion/Commercial the Salem Alternative performs worse than Alternative 4D, but better than the No Build.



This is because Alternative 4D had intersection improvements that Salem Alternative doesn't have and there is more traffic on the existing bridges with the Salem Alternative than with Alternative 4D.

- ◆ **Craig Pope:** The weave movements are the biggest problem and complication. I'm not seeing that the weave is eliminated (which causes conflicts during the peak hours) on the eastside. Those are engineering details that we might not need to talk about here. The community wants to know that we are creating a safer and smoother system, not about the engineering details.
  - **Dave:** Yes, you are correct that there are a lot of details. If the group decides that this alternative is the preferred alternative the project team will create a micro simulation model to study the weave movements and several other traffic operation details. We thought that the group might want to refine the alternative further and it is expensive to develop and run the model, so it should only be done once an alternative is selected as preferred.
- ◆ **Cathy Clark:** Is reducing the weave movement on the existing bridges included in this alternative (westbound to Wallace/ Highway 22)? That change would make a huge impact on the traffic congestion, especially Commercial southbound to Marion Bridge.
  - **Dave:** That is not included in any of the alternatives.
  - **Dan Fricke:** The northbound Front Avenue traffic destined for West Salem would need to be redirected via other downtown streets to Marion Street and there would have to be a barrier installed on the bridge to prevent the weaving.
- ◆ **Craig Pope:** I'm concerned that we don't have those details because that would help us make a decision on the preferred alternative. We need to figure out how to move the traffic more freely and create traffic remedies now.
  - **Julie:** Maybe if the Oversight Team could provide us with policy direction about top priorities, it will help with the trade-offs as we move forward.
- ◆ **Dan Clem:** Moving traffic through the east bridgehead with the maximum v/c and separating bikes/pedestrians from major traffic movements are my priorities.

The group then took a break for lunch.

## Environmental assessment

Michael Hoffmann shared figures comparing the Salem Alternative footprint to that of Alternative 4D and highlighted the key differences in impacts for each alternative.

Michael said that the preliminary analysis of the Salem Alternative showed that there are roughly half as many residential/business properties impacted because there would be less widening of Wallace and Glen Creek roads. There would be few-to-no new displacements associated explicitly for the Salem Alternative that would not have occurred under Alternative 4D.

- ◆ **Dan Clem:** How will farm land be impacted? Is the impacted farm land in use?
  - **Michael:** A lot of the land is in use, but remember that most of the impact is associated with overhead structure, not a direct at-grade impact, and we aren't sure at this time if there would be access restrictions to the land after ODOT would purchase it for the bridge right of way, so we have conservatively assumed the land under the structure would be bought by ODOT and would be access restricted, but it's very possible that farm operations could continue.

Dave added that the estimated cost for the Salem Alternative is between \$350-400 million compared to Alternative 4D which was estimated at \$680 million. This is due to the reduced amount of elevated bridge structure. The same assumptions for bridge type (girder) and contingency (40%) for cost changes were used for comparison purposes.

The Oversight Team agreed to review the policy statements as written out in this summary before agreeing to them, since there was a lot of discussion regarding the best wording for the policy statements. Here are the draft policy statements:

- ◆ Wherever possible, separate high volume vehicle traffic from bike/pedestrian facilities in the project area for safety and improved traffic mobility.
- ◆ Seek a better solution for providing access from Highway 22 to West Salem other than closing the westbound Rosemont exit-ramp through development of the Highway 22 Expressway Management Plan (Doaks Ferry to Marion and Center Street Bridges) by ODOT; however, the closure of this exit-ramp is more acceptable than the "braided ramp" design presented in Alternative 4D (due to its significant impact on the Edgewater Street greenway and business district).
- ◆ To the greatest extent possible, reduce the length of bridge structure along the riverbank associated with the eastbound Highway 22 ramp to Marine taking into account outcomes of a future Expressway Management Plan for this section of Highway 22.
- ◆ Encourage the development of a bike/pedestrian loop between the Union Street Pedestrian Bridge and new bridges on the east and west sides of the river, while minimizing the fiscal impact to roadway funding sources.

## Schedule

Dave then reviewed the overall schedule with the group stating that it will be critical to start field work in spring 2014, which means that the preferred alternative would need to be selected by February. If this doesn't happen, the entire project will be delayed by a year because we will have missed the window of time during the year when certain environmental field work can be performed.



Dave said that the schedule anticipates that the Oversight Team will meet with their councils/commissions and share any updates with the group, so that everyone is on the same page before coming back to vote in February 2014. Dan Fricke added that the project team didn't want to dictate how this information is taken back to the respective groups, but that the team is willing to speak to anyone either individually or as a group.

## Statements from the public in attendance

Dave asked the public for any remaining comments.

- ◆ **Scott Bassett:** This has been a very painful process and seems to be dragging on endlessly. Unless we have a plan we are wasting time and money that could go to something useful. You are low-balling the price that we can't even afford. You have deferred how to connect Highway 22 to West Salem; what are you going to do if you aren't doing that? You are up to your eyeballs in zombies and you can't see that the project is dead. The eight neighborhood associations that voted against this were clear that until the existing bridges are retrofitted to withstand an earthquake this should stop, since you'll be planning until 2015 and you haven't done anything to help the existing bridges. I appreciate the time and effort you've put into this, but it's so painful.

## Next steps

Dave reviewed the next steps, reiterating that the project team can provide support to the Oversight Team as they discuss the Salem Alternative with their groups.

- ◆ **Dan Clem:** When the jurisdictions review this alternative if there are any changes or updates that need to be shared with the group, every effort should be made to keep the group informed. He asked if the group could meet sooner than February if their processes were completed.
  - **Dave:** Yes, the group could meet in December or January to share information, but that communication should also occur between staff and Oversight Team members outside of these meetings to avoid the delays that were experienced last year.
- ◆ **Sam Brentano:** The group should coordinate and alert the project team if things are changing.

Mike Jaffe reminded the group that the next steps are that the Oversight Team selects a preferred alternative and then the SKATS Policy Committee will also meet to endorse the preferred alternative (but does not yet amend the regional transportation plan). Then the City and County update their TSPs through formal amendments, including financial constraint issues and showing how the initial phase will be funded. To get the record of decision (ROD) some component of the initial phase must be funded in the SKATS TIP. There will be more discussion about this at a later meeting.