



Oversight Team Meeting Summary

ATTENDEES:	Cathy Clark/ Keizer City Councilor	Sonny Chickering/ODOT Region 2 Manager	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	Peter Fernandez/City of Salem	Dave Simmons/CH2M HILL
	Rod Thompson/ODOT	Mike Jaffe/Mid- Willamette Valley Council of Governments	Brandy Steffen/CH2M HILL
	Julie Warncke/City of Salem		
GUESTS:	<p>Public: Scott Bassett; Mike Read; Jason Brandt/Salem Chamber of Commerce; Mike Erdmann/Home Builders Association; Jim Scheppeke; Maryann Beirne; Justin Much/Statesman Journal; Douglas Kirkpatrick; Marty Andersen/TY Lin; Calvin Larwood/WH Pacific; Raquel Moore-Green</p> <p>Agency representatives: Gary Fish/DLCD; Bob Cortright/DLCD; Councilor Chuck Bennett/City of Salem; Tim Potter/ODOT; Karen Odenthal/Marion County; Nancy Boyer and Richard Schmid/ Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments; Debbie Beneavidez/ODOT; Jessica Santiago/ODOT</p>		
DATE:	<p>Wednesday, July 31, 2013</p> <p>Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments Office</p>		

Introduction

Dave Simmons welcomed the group and asked the Oversight Team (OT) members to introduce themselves. He reviewed the agenda, mentioning that this was the group's first meeting in nearly a year. Dave noted that the purpose of the meeting was to understand what actions have been taken over that time by the individual agencies on the OT and to discuss the direction that the project team should move regarding the alternatives under consideration (Salem Alternative and 4D).

Statements from the public in attendance

Dave asked the public in attendance to introduce them 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.

- ◆ **Maryann Beirne:** Ms. Beirne mentioned that there isn't a traffic problem in Salem, particularly now that the Newburg-Dundee Bypass is being built, thereby providing an alternative to Salem Parkway/OR 22. She added that not many people know about the project and say that they don't want to pay for a new bridge and would vote against it.
- ◆ **Mike Read:** Mr. Read said that he saw signs for "No bridge" and didn't know what that was all about. He has researched the problem and has spoken with City staff members. He thinks that the main problem is the access to the bridge and that the current width of the bridge is adequate to handle the traffic, both now and in the future. He added that the reason for the bridge is not clear and that he isn't for or against a new bridge, he would just like more information about the need for the project.
- ◆ **Scott Bassett:** Mr. Bassett added that the problem is a north-south connection, not an east-west connection, particularly between Marion and Hope streets. 1000 Friends of Oregon have stated that the traffic estimates are wrong and that creative thinking is required to solve the problem. Scott said that public comments were made over a year ago and requested that the project staff provide responses to those comments. He predicted the project could unravel soon.
- ◆ **Jason Brandt:** Mr. Brandt thanked the OT for their years of service and said that the Salem Chamber of Commerce is a partner in the process. He said that a wealth of people feel that there are problems with congestion and that there needs to be a plan for the future, to help strengthen the economy. Livability around the bridges will get worse and the intersections will fail over the next few years. The new bridge will help regional mobility and connectivity.
- ◆ **Jim Scheppeke:** Mr. Scheppeke expressed concern about funding. He pointed out that at the Keizer City Council meeting, there was a lot of talk about funding for the bridge. The SRC project website says that the state and federal government will not pay for the project; if this isn't true then you need to remove it from the website. Eight neighborhood associations are on record in opposition to the project, including West Salem. He recommended that the project use a contingency task from the current work order to conduct a scientific phone survey to understand the level of support for the project and if people are willing to pay for it. He said he would be shocked if 20% of citizens were in support of the project.

DLCD statewide goal exception discussion

Sonny Chickering from ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) provided context for the presentation on the statewide goal exception. He said that all ODOT NEPA (National

Environmental Policy Act) processes coordinate closely with partner agencies such as the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). Sonny indicated that DLCD brought forth an important perspective that should be shared with the OT as they move forward on making a recommendation on a preferred alternative. Sonny introduced Bob Cortright from DLCD.

Bob started the presentation stating that DLCD wanted to remind the group of the goal requirements and procedures for the project, as well as answer any land use decision questions.

Bob pointed out that all but one of the original alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) would require a goal exception, as would the Salem Alternative. To get a goal exception for a bridge outside of the urban growth boundary (UGB), the project must show that non-exception options are unreasonable. More information is needed for all of the alternatives to show that a goal exception is warranted. The threshold for reasonable/unreasonable projects is not defined at this time; need to consider cost, operational feasibility, and economic dislocation. Usually projects that don't require a goal exception cost more.

Bob added that transportation funding is limited and the needs are growing. To address this, ODOT has established alternative mobility standards that tolerate more congestion in urban areas. He added that the traffic projections and mobility expectations were based on 2006 data. He suggested that the OT give staff direction about how to address these land use questions and information that will be helpful for distinguishing between reasonable and unreasonable alternatives. Once a goal exception is necessary, public notice must be given at the earliest opportunity. Bob said that public review and comment would be needed before a final decision is made.

The group had the following questions:

- ◆ Are greenhouse gas reductions included in these factors?
 - Would need to look at what ODOT has done in other situations; however, there isn't a big difference in the DEIS so it might not be a significant impact.
- ◆ Would the state pay for the business relocations that may be needed when Wallace Road is widened?
 - Trying to avoid increased costs associated with a goal exception.
- ◆ Concerned about regional mobility for economic vitality and freight movement. Could off-peak and peak hour traffic be compared to understand regional mobility for the alternatives?
- ◆ Marine Drive requires a small change to the UGB, do these alternatives require more than that?
 - Marine Drive is in the TSP and will require a change to that document, but will not require a goal exception.
- ◆ Is there a list of all the goal exception projects in the last 10 years? Is there a project that doesn't require a goal exception?

- Sellwood Bridge and Columbia River Crossing (CRC) didn't require goal exceptions. All new bridges over the Willamette River would require a goal exception. Bob agreed to provide a list of projects that have required goal exceptions.

Jurisdictional input on Alternative 4D

Dave introduced the agenda item by reminding the group that they were tasked to take the preliminary recommendation of Alternative 4D back to their respective bodies and gather feedback. He asked that the group go around the room to describe the actions they have taken.

- ◆ **City of Salem:** Peter Fernandez, Public Works Director, explained that staff and City Council met to discuss the alternative with the public and there was a large contingent of the Council that didn't like Alternative 4D, so they have spent the last 9 months developing and discussing the "Salem Alternative." The goal was to create a plan that was acceptable to the council and then bring it to the OT for review and discussion.

The biggest concerns were the elevated structure and impacts to the park and Pioneer Village on the west and the ramps on the east. Impacts to the Edgewater greenway were a concern, as were the exit at Rosemont Avenue and impacts to buildings. The high cost of Alternative 4D was a concern, specifically related to the surface street changes that went beyond the projects identified in the City's TSP. Finally the Council wants a "signature bridge."

Council removed all work that would require an amendment to the TSP due to the impact on the community; the interchange was moved away from Rosemont Avenue to reduce impact along Edgewater Street; changed many of the ramps to signals; and suggested that piers in the water be minimized or eliminated, but they are ok in the floodplain. The council did not get into details about access issues or traffic engineering.

Councilor Bennett added that the discussion of economic development is vague but is an important factor, especially for the eastside.

- ◆ **Salem-Keizer Area Transit District:** Bob Krebs said that the board wrote a letter outlining enhancements for any alternative that would increase transit efficiency and ridership, regardless of the alternative selected. Specifically looking at a park and ride and transit center in West Salem, signal priority for buses, and bypass lanes. He added that the Transit Board is neutral on the alternative selected and is providing these ideas as ways to increase capacity over the river, with the hope that adding transit improvements as outlined in the letter will handle 10-20% of the existing traffic through transit options.
- ◆ **City of Keizer:** Cathy Clark said that Peter made a presentation to the Keizer City Council on Monday, July 29. The Council would unanimously like to study the Salem Alternative. Some of the main benefits the Council sees in the Salem Alternative compared to Alternative 4D: less cost with fewer elevated structures;

potential improvements at the bridgeheads; limited access along Marine Drive to increase mobility and improve safety; possible opportunities for economic redevelopment at the bridgeheads; preservation of Front Street for bikes and cars; and opportunities for bike and pedestrian improvements throughout the area.

The council doesn't support the change of Union Street Bridge from bike/pedestrian to auto use. It is important to keep facilities for bikes/pedestrians separate for improved safety and increasing use of these facilities. With the Minto Brown Island bike bridge there will be a good network for bike mobility for local and regional users. Both alternatives improve connection to Keizer transit center and they hope to have passenger rail in the future. It will be important to have as much free flow (like the parkway, with limited number of access and intersections) on the alternatives as possible to reduce stops, which increases greenhouse gas emissions. Keizer also supports the need to amend the UGB or pursue a goal exception and will work with Salem on that.

- ◆ **Marion County:** Sam Brentano said that the County has not had an official meeting on this topic in the last four months. He said that the Commissioners are ok with everything if the expressway is included; the Salem Alternative slows things down, but they can live with that. He is not a fan of the signature bridge; the ones we have are fine and we don't want to spend a lot on something fancy. He added that they are excited to get the plan done and to start looking for funding, since this is a project for people in 30 years when the populations will be double what it is today.
- ◆ **Polk County:** Craig Pope said that the County has not had a formal conversation since Election Day last year, since they were trying to give Salem the time and space to work through the issues. The commissioners will have a discussion soon before holding a public hearing on the topic. Residents want leaders to provide a planning solution for the mobility and livability of the future, but be sensitive to cost and revenue generation. Every project is a legacy project because of the limited funds and the length of planning and construction. It takes a long time, but will take longer the more we delay. Polk County would like more data to find the right collaborative approach. Polk County will end up with the lion's share of the work for a goal exception and land use changes so we want to make sure to understand this information and have appropriate funds available. This is a regional problem with issues that are mostly within the City of Salem; he said that the Commission recognizes this situation. Overall, he said that mobility is important (don't slow things down), along with access to the highway and reducing conflict with bikes and pedestrians.
- ◆ **ODOT:** Sonny added that he appreciated the level of effort that Salem City Council has done to find a workable solution for people on both sides of the river. He hopes that the other jurisdictions also take the time to study the impacts before voting.

Dave asked the group to wait on making a decision about what to do with the information about the Salem Alternative and how to move forward until the details have been reviewed. The group took a 10 minute break.

Process for developing the preferred alternative

Dave said that the project team had met to discuss some of the technical details for the Salem Alternative. The first step would be to run the travel demand model with the modifications called for with the Salem Alternative. Key intersections will be analyzed to assess traffic operations (not all the study intersections used in the DEIS). The footprint of the Salem Alternative is within the project area and is similar to alternatives 4A and 4D. He said that if the OT would like the project staff to study the Salem Alternative, they would look at cost and assess the impacts that are different from the DEIS information. However it would not be at the level of detail as was done for the DEIS. Once a decision is made on a preferred alternative, the project team would need to complete the technical analysis of the selected alternative to a comparable level of detail as was done for the other alternatives evaluated in the DEIS, for a consistent comparison within the Final EIS.

Dave reviewed the details of the Salem Alternative:

- ◆ **Eola/Rosemont access:** The project team sees this as a significant effort to study and develop a solution and the resulting area of impact for the project would expand further to the west. Evaluating the best solution to replace the existing Rosemont interchange could also be accomplished as part of a facility plan ODOT will be undertaking in the future. The project team recommended that this portion of the Salem Alternative not be evaluated as part of this project.
- ◆ **West Salem:** This proposal is straight forward, using existing streets and new streets included in the City's TSP to distribute traffic. The functional class for Marine Drive will need to be determined, particularly between Glen Creek and Hope.
- ◆ **Bridge:** This would likely be a single bridge with two lanes of traffic in each direction. Bridge types will be examined that minimize the number of piers in the water. Per discussion, regional and efficient flow is most important, followed by reducing the number of piers in the water (piers in the water were more preferable to elevated ramps east of the new bridge).
- ◆ **Signature bridge:** The project team will bring information on bridge types and high level cost estimates after determining the number of ramps needed at the east side of the bridge. The project team will also bring overall cost estimates to the group, since that was an important factor in the creation of the Salem Alternative.

Some things the OT asked the project team to study:

- ◆ Would the design proposed at the east bridgehead in the Salem Alternative be more efficient than the design proposed with Alternative 4A?
- ◆ Look into lower cost "signature bridge" options, such as bridgehead artwork, landscaping or other aesthetic solutions like the Seattle Park Bridge.
- ◆ How do we make the bridgeheads function properly?

Dave told the group that if they would like the project team to study the Salem Alternative, it would take two to three months within the current budget (contingency task for a hybrid

alternative). The OT would review the information and make a recommendation over two additional OT meetings.

Dan Clem proposed a motion that the OT authorize the project team to develop the data necessary for the Salem Alternative to provide comparable information for the OT to make a recommendation on the preferred alternative. Cathy seconded the motion. All OT members were in favor.

Statements from the public in attendance

Dave asked the public for any remaining comments.

- ◆ **Maryann Beirne:** This is all a learning process for me. I came up with an alternative (2C) but didn't know how to get it to the right people. It would have addressed the bridgehead project and would have been much less costly. It would have elevated westbound traffic starting at Cottage and adding a lane on each side of the bridges. There are a lot of residents on fixed incomes and they don't want to pay for an expensive new bridge. She asked how to present her idea.
 - Dave said that he would speak with her after the meeting.
- ◆ **Jim Scheppke:** Handed out data regarding congestion and that bridge use has held steady for the last 11 years and that use is down 5%, so it's not related to the recession. A 1995 study shows that traffic on the bridge hasn't increased though population has grown by 75% in that time, so population growth doesn't equate with traffic increase.
 - Commissioner Pope asked for the citation of these studies. Jim said they were from ODOT.
- ◆ **Scott Bassett:** Hopes that the next phase will address land use criteria and thinks that the project will have a tough time meeting the land use criteria and getting through the process. He said that he didn't hear answers to several concerns: is Marine Drive a viaduct along the park? How can the needs of local and park traffic be included in this plan? Need to supplement the DEIS with current traffic counts. The OT has punted the decision on the Eola/Rosemont exit which means that this is no longer a corridor plan.

Next steps

Dave added that the group will have two more meetings to select a recommended preferred alternative. It is anticipated that the group will meet again in early October to review the data analysis of the Salem Alternative. The final meeting is anticipated in the winter of 2013/14 when the selection of a preferred alternative.