



## Oversight Team

ATTENDEES:	Sam Brentano/Marion County, Lloyd Chapman/Salem-Keizer Transit District, Richard Walsh/City of Keizer, Dan Clem/City of Salem, Dave Cox/FHWA, Jeff Scheick /ODOT
UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE:	Tom Ritchey/Polk County
STAFF PARTICIPANTS:	Dan Fricke/ODOT, Julie Warncke/City of Salem, Rod Thompson/ODOT, Mike Jaffe/SKATS, Dave Simmons/CH2M HILL, Marcy Schwartz/CH2M HILL, Sam Seskin/CH2M HILL
GUESTS:	Richard Schmid/SKATS, Nancy Boyer/MWVCOG, Emily Lawton/FHWA
DATE:	April 2, 2007

## Introductions and Agenda Review

Following self-introductions, Marcy Schwartz indicated the key meeting objectives were to discuss project funding options and to review the alternatives development process.

## Public Comment

There was no public comment.

## Funding Presentation

Mike Jaffe used a PowerPoint presentation to describe the process used to include a project in the financially constrained Salem-Keizer Regional Transportation Plan. Sam Seskin followed with a PowerPoint presentation on funding options. Both presentations indicated there are large funding gaps between needed infrastructure and available federal, state, and local funding sources. The focus of Sam's presentation was on a "menu" of new local sources that might be appropriate to fund part or all of the Salem Crossing Project.

Discussion included the idea that perhaps the focus should not be on fitting into the regional financial constraints, but, rather, on creating a project of national or statewide significance. Even if federal "earmarks" were forthcoming, past "earmarks" received for Oregon projects have ranged between \$5 million and \$22 million. Even if larger "earmarks" were possible, they could not be included in the EIS as a funding approach until the funds were actually allocated. Therefore, the group agreed it is necessary to have a community dialogue on new local funding sources as part of the public outreach efforts and to include an analysis of the impacts of using new local funding sources in the environmental impact statement (EIS).

The OTIA project does not provide a probable source of funding for the project. The bond payment schedule is carefully managed to provide funding for already approved projects. It might be possible to use origin/destination data to identify a separate benefit area for the project that could be taxed to fund the project. This approach has been used in Washington State. In the case of creating a local option gas tax, it might be important to use the proceeds to fund a range of projects (rather than just the bridge) to gain broad based support.

Tolling options assume that a new bridge and the existing bridges would be tolled. David Cox pointed out that FHWA does not permit the tolling of existing facilities unless the existing and new facilities are in the same corridor. This is a determination made by headquarters FHWA staff. The effects of any tolling option on traffic diversion and the physical footprint of the project must be considered. Although ODOT's policy is that any toll projects in the state will be electronic, that may not eliminate the need for some form of manual collection. Manual collection stations require right-of-way and operational consideration. The physical difficulties of tolling the existing bridges must also be addressed. Tolling decisions would likely be made by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) and the FHWA division that deals with National Highway System matters. The exact decisionmaking process will be explored further.

A project bridge option that creates a bypass of downtown Salem might be more attractive to some local jurisdictions in Polk County than a bridge between West Salem and downtown Salem.

If the new bridge becomes part of the National Highway System (NHS), the project could tap into a different funding program. This designation would affect the design of intersections and access. Currently, only Hwy 22 is on the NHS. The Salem Parkway, Liberty and Commercial Street couplet, Front St. and Hwy 22 on the east side of the river are state designated freight routes.

## Alternative Development Process

Dave Simmons presented the proposed approach for development of project alternatives. The PowerPoint presentation described the various components of alternatives including the crossing location, system connections, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit, transportation system management and transportation demand management. "Off-project" elements might include roadway widening or intersection improvement outside the immediate project area. In developing crossing locations, the project team will focus on the project area from the existing bridges north to the Tryon/Pine corridor, as defined in the Study Area Refinement Memorandum (October 20, 2006).

## Evaluation Framework

The Task Force (TF) has completed its work on the Evaluation Framework. At its last meeting, the group approved the Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures and the revised language in the body of the text. The Threshold Criteria are the subject of policy disagreements between ODOT and the Department Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). Staff from the two agencies are scheduled to meet in the next few weeks to resolve their differences and determine the appropriate wording for the criteria. As proposed by

ODOT, to meet the Purpose and Need Statement a concept would be required to meet the adopted state or local government mobility standard. DLCD wants to ensure that a “low build” concept meets the Purpose and Need Statement. After the agencies have met, the revised version of the Evaluation Framework will be presented to the Oversight Team (OT) for approval.

## Check-In

Marcy asked the group to give the project team feedback on the process to date, how well it is meeting their needs, things that could be changed for the better, things that are going well, etc. OT members indicated concern that the project is behind schedule by two months because it is important for the project to be completed in time for the next federal reauthorization bill. They thought that perhaps the TF is involved with too much detail. If the TF is having difficulty in reaching decisions, those matters should be referred to the OT for resolution. In that case, the OT should be provided with majority and minority reports from the TF to assist them in understanding the issues of importance. The group generally felt the project team was doing good work, and that the approach was appropriate. The group also requested more advance notice of the meetings. Efforts by the Salem City Council and the Polk County Commissioners to garner support for the project from the federal delegation and the public is not viewed as a conflict with the process, but, rather, an attempt to raise awareness of the importance of the project to the community.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held following resolution of the issues associated with the threshold criteria. The OT will be notified well in advance of the meeting date. Initial project concepts are expected to be ready for presentation to the TF within the next few months.