



## Oversight Team

**ATTENDEES:** Dan Clem/City of Salem, Sam Brentano/Marion County, Lloyd Chapman/Salem-Keizer Transit District, Richard Walsh/City of Keiser, Cathy Clark/City of Keizer, Eric Havig /ODOT, Emily Laughton/FHWA, Tom Richey/Polk County

**STAFF PARTICIPANTS:** Dan Fricke/ODOT, Rod Thompson/ODOT, Julie Warncke/City of Salem, Tom Kaffun/City of Salem, Aaron Geisler/Polk County, Mike Jaffe/MWVCOG, Dave Simmons/CH2M HILL, Dan Speicher/CH2M HILL, Kristen Hull/CH2M HILL, Marcy Schwartz/CH2M HILL, Ed Chamberland/W&H Pacific

**GUESTS:** Darlene Strozut/Highland Neighborhood Association; Chuck Bennet/Salem City Council

**DATE:** October 19, 2007

## Introductions and Agenda Review

Following self-introductions, Marcy Schwartz indicated the key meeting objectives were to get feedback on the evaluation results and obtain a preliminary sense of the group about which alternatives should be eliminated from further consideration. No decisions will be made during this meeting, but results will be used as input for the upcoming public open houses and Task Force meetings.

## Public Comment

Chuck Bennet indicated that he is the Salem City Councilor who represents areas crossed by the Yellow and Green alignments. He is asking the neighborhoods to get involved in the discussion because these alternatives have substantial impacts on their communities. Specific concerns relate to adverse effects on neighborhood cohesion, parks, and schools. He is also concerned about project costs, and feels not all of the costs can be borne by Salem's "pockets."

## Project Updates and Schedule

Marcy reported that issue of the mobility threshold criteria has not yet been resolved. ODOT and DLCD will consider whether or not to consider a "low build" alternative in the draft EIS as a stand alone alternative or a phase of a larger build alternative. In any case, the "low build" alternative will not be evaluated using the goals and objectives; that evaluation was designed to compare alternatives that were able to meet the 1.00 and .85 mobility standards.

Consideration of the “low build” alternative in the draft EIS is a policy question rather than one to be resolved based on the evaluation process.

The “transit and transportation efficiency” (TSM/TDM) alternative will not be evaluated as a stand alone alternative, but will be combined as elements of all the build alternatives.

The Task Force met on October 17, considered the evaluation results, and discussed the relative merit of the alternatives. They made some preliminary judgments about which ones could be eliminated. Dave will present those to you later in the meeting.

All of the alternatives will be presented at the upcoming open houses on November 8 (Highland) and November 14 (West Salem). Results will be presented to the Task Force on December 12 and to you on December 14. At your December meeting, you will be asked to decide which alternatives should be analyzed in the draft EIS.

## Evaluation Results

Dan Speicher and Kristen Hull presented a summary of the evaluation results memorandum, highlighting comparisons overall scores for each alternative and scores on each of the goal categories. They pointed out that the evaluation had been revised based on Task Force comments. For example, the initial evaluation considered impacts on all schools, public and well as private. Task Force members made the case that impacts to public elementary schools were more significant than other schools because these served as community centers in ways the others did not. The revised analysis adjusts the scoring to reflect this difference. In addition, revisions were made to scores on mobility-related objectives. The original scoring differentiated performance beyond what the Task Force felt the data supported. Basically the alternatives perform at nearly the same levels with regard to travel times through the corridor, so revised scoring reflects a narrower range of performance.

Oversight Team members were very concerned that the weights established by the Task Force had not focused enough on congestion relief, even though about a third of the weights were related to mobility issues. They also felt that cost and the ability to finance the project had also not been given enough weight. In addition, the group felt that despite its high score, the Green + Red alternative was a “non-starter” because of its extreme impacts to Wallace Marine Park and the urban renewal district. It also did not provide a route for through traffic to avoid downtown Salem, another important objective. Kristen explained that the evaluation had taken into account these issues, but perhaps had not adequately assessed the extent of the adverse impacts. The evaluation exercise is just a tool to help the Task Force and the Oversight Team in determining which alternatives to select for further evaluation; it is not “the answer” and must be balanced with factors that it cannot effectively consider.

Oversight Team members were concerned that they had not had enough time to digest the evaluation results before the information would be presented to the public. In future decisions, the “lead time” needs to be lengthened.

In response to group requests for more information, Dan ran the decision model to answer the following questions:

- How would results change if all of the weights were removed?
- How would results change if congestion relief were weighted higher?

In both these cases, the results varied very little, and the overall rankings remained the same. Dan Speicher indicated this suggested a very robust model, in which the performance of the alternatives against the objectives was driving results.

The group discussed which alternatives they would be comfortable in eliminating from further discussion. The consensus was for elimination of Purple, Orange, Blue + Red, and Forest. Most also favored elimination of Pink and Yellow. Although most felt strongly that Green + Red was a poor choice, they felt further discussion by the community was likely needed because of its high score.

The group then discussed the types of information to be presented at the open house. They directed staff to:

- Provide information on all the alternatives.
- Provide a clear understanding of what the “non-red” alternatives include. Specifically, the “non-red” alternatives all included extensive improvements to the existing bridges. These need to be pointed out more prominently.
- Present scores for performance of each alternative against the goals, but not overall rankings. Ask the public which alternatives should be ranked highest.
- Provide preliminary costs of each alternative, but emphasize that these are preliminary costs only.
- Provide information to the public about preliminary Task Force and Oversight Team opinions on the alternatives to stimulate discussion.

Each Oversight Team member was asked to voice his or her sense of the process to date. There was consensus that the group was comfortable with moving the project ahead as planned. Lloyd Chapman specifically stated his belief that it was important to include a broad range of alternatives in the draft EIS, including a “low build” alternative. Richard Walsh requested additional information about the volume-to-capacity ratios for “non-red” alternatives without the existing bridge improvements.

## Next Steps

The next Oversight Team meeting will be on December 14.\*

**\* NOTE: this date was subsequently changed to December 19.**