



Oversight Team Meeting Summary

ATTENDEES:	Cathy Clark/ City of Keizer	Sonny Chickering/ ODOT Region 2 Manager	Dan Clem/ Salem City Councilor
	Emily Lawton/ FHWA	Craig Pope/ Polk County Commissioner	Bob Krebs/ Salem-Keizer Transit District, Board of Directors
	Sam Brentano/ Marion County Commissioner		
STAFF PARTICIPANTS:	Dan Fricke/ ODOT, Rod Thompson/ ODOT, Julie Warncke/ City of Salem, Richard Schmid/ Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, Dave Simmons/ CH2M HILL, Michael Hoffmann/ CH2M HILL, Brandy Steffen/ CH2M HILL		
GUESTS:	<p>Public: Scott Bassett, Molly Bensman, Virginia Good, Justin Resch, Karen Reynolds, Lisa Fordyce, Douglas Kirkpatrick</p> <p>Task Force Members: Russell Beaton; Karen Odenthal, Marion County; Gary Fish, DLCD; Cindy Callahan/ FHWA; Austin McGuigan, Polk County</p>		
DATE:	Thursday, August 23, 2012 Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments Office		

Welcome and Agenda Review

Dave Simmons welcomed the group and asked the Oversight Team members to introduce themselves. He reviewed the agenda, mentioning that this is the group's first solo meeting in more than a year, whereas the Task Force has met several times over the last three months. Dave noted that the purpose of the meeting is to understand the feedback from the Task Force and reflect on that information.

Public Comment

Dave asked the public in attendance to introduce themselves and to keep public statements to 3 minutes due to the limited meeting time length.

- Scott Bassett reviewed the Task Force process, noting that he has been following the process closely and is concerned that the project hasn't made a concerted enough effort to examine smaller fixes to address needs; he provided the group with a list of ideas that he stated have not been considered in the process. He stated that the Oversight Team needs to make a decision despite the fact that the Task Force didn't have a majority of members recommending Alternative 4D – which was the alternative that got the most votes. Mr. Bassett mentioned schedule delays and the lack of discussion regarding

funding. Mr. Bassett was also concerned that the lack of an expeditious decision on a preferred alternative would create a shadow of future uncertainty for the property owners in the potentially impacted areas of Build alternatives, as well as for bridge users.

Oversight Team Charge

Dave reminded Oversight Team members that details regarding the charge of the body were reviewed at the April 2012 meeting. Dave noted that a key element is that the group, all of whom are members of the SKATS Policy Committee, must reach consensus on a locally preferred alternative. This means that the Oversight Team will need to be in agreement, to proceed to the next step required for including the locally preferred alternative in the Regional Transportation System Plan (RTSP).

As the next step in the process, each Oversight Team member will go back to their respective agency to relay on the Task Force feedback and develop a recommendation for a preferred alternative. Dave noted that the project team will be available to assist in those discussions and provide additional information as needed. *[Please note that data needs identified during the meeting are shown in italics in the remainder of this memo.]*

Dave said that the Task Force presented a variety of positions and opinions that are summarized in the Task Force Feedback Memo which was provided as a meeting handout. Dave asked that the group keep an open mind during the meeting discussion and with their respective agencies to ensure that consensus on a locally preferred alternative recommendation can be reached in the upcoming months. Dave then reviewed the current schedule with the group, anticipating that September and October would be an ideal time for each Oversight Team member to meet with their respective commission/council to discuss making a jurisdictional locally preferred alternative recommendation, and that, subsequent to all applicable jurisdictional locally preferred alternative recommendations being made, these jurisdictional recommendations will then be presented and discussed at the next Oversight Team meeting, currently slated for November. That meeting will also include a discussion of any priorities and/or proposed modifications suggested by a local jurisdiction.

Dave mentioned again that the project team is available to support requests for additional data or presentations to councils/commissions to bring everyone up to speed on the project and the trade-offs between alternatives. He reminded the group that the project team is here to help, but needs to be made aware of any Oversight Team member requests.

Alternatives Discussion

Dave reminded the Oversight Team that the Task Force discussed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) alternatives over the course of three meetings, eliminating some DEIS alternatives from further Task Force consideration through pair-wise comparisons that were designed to compare alternatives based on which alternative best met the Purpose and Need statements. The Task Force also considered public comments collected through the Draft EIS process, as well as the opinions of their respective constituents. Dave added that the Oversight Team is not bound to the smaller range of alternatives per the Task Force Feedback Memo since

the Task Force is an advisory group – they could choose a different alternative or discuss a hybrid alternative.

- *Cathy Clark mentioned that, because there are newer council/commission members that may raise such questions, there will be a need for a summary describing the reason why each alternative was dropped by the Task Force, as well as why there are not bridge alternatives at more northerly crossing locations than those which are in the DEIS.*

Dave discussed the Task Force Feedback Memo with the Oversight Team. The Feedback Memo captured the input of three Task Force meetings. Dave noted that, due to the wide range of perspectives among Task Force members, the Task Force was only able to narrow the alternatives down to the No Build, 2A, 4A, and 4D (from nine total alternatives). Dave then noted that detailed summaries of the Task Force meetings, which include the reasons why alternatives were dropped, are available at the project website. Dave then quickly reviewed the differences between the four alternatives not dropped by the Task Force:

- The No Build Alternative would implement adopted, planned improvements including the extension of Marine Drive
- Alternative 2A would widen the existing bridges and Wallace Road
- Alternative 4A would include a new bridge with minimal street connections at Pine/Hickory
- Alternative 4D would expand upon Alternative 4A to provide free flow connections to Salem Parkway and OR 22, it would also connect to the street system in West Salem

Dave pointed out that the first page of the Task Force Feedback Memo shows a tally of votes taken at the end of the last Task Force meeting, wherein each Task Force member was given one vote on these four alternatives. A significant number of members supported the No Build because they were not comfortable with the Build alternatives and felt that there were smaller projects that could solve the problem in a less expensive or intrusive fashion, including increasing alternative modes of transportation (several Task Force members stated that their vote for the No-build alternative did not mean they supported doing nothing). Others who selected the No Build were concerned about the lack of a financial plan, the inability to fund the Build alternative, and Build alternative impacts.

- Cathy Clark asked if the Task Force knew about the Alternate Modes Study, which suggested an 8% increase in mode shift through alternative modes. Julie Warncke said that the Task Force as a body was made aware of the study, though a few newer members may have been less familiar with the details.

Dave added that some Task Force members were concerned that the traffic volume forecast numbers were overestimated, particularly considering what some believed to be a recent trend which showed a decrease in single occupant vehicle travel.

- Bob Krebs felt that the Alternate Modes Study lacked vision by limiting the scope to traditional transit mode options. He added that the Salem-Keizer Transit District is not opposed to a new bridge, but that increased transit service could greatly reduce the amount of traffic using the bridges. He felt that the Alternate Modes Study should have examined fixed rail transit, which could have increased the alternate mode shift beyond 8%.

Dave Simmons then said he would go through the Feedback Memo with the Oversight Team alternative by alternative and address any questions or comments *[note: Oversight Team comments/discussion are provided as bullet points underneath the text for each of the Alternative subsections that follow]*.

Alternative 1/No Build

- No questions from the Oversight Team

Alternative 2A

Dave said that many of the Task Force members who were in favor of Alternative 2A mentioned that the alternative's combination of lower cost and improvements best met the Purpose and Need statement without the associated negative issues related to the new bridges (including neighborhood impacts).

Of the remaining four alternatives, there were only a few Task Force members in support of this alternative.

Dave mentioned that state land use requirements affect all of the Build alternatives, including Alternative 2A, although the Build alternatives that go outside the urban growth boundary would need exceptions that are more difficult to obtain. A Greenway Goal exception would be needed for all Build alternatives.

Those Task Force members opposed to 2A stated the need for a redundant river crossing for emergency situations, additional connectivity, and removing traffic through downtown.

Alternative 4A

Dave mentioned that the Task Force members in favor of Alternative 4A did so for the following reasons: 1) additional connectivity and capacity; 2) it would move traffic out of downtown; 3) it provided the most "bang for the buck". Other Task Force members thought it was a good starting point for future phasing.

Those Task Force members opposed to this alternative stated the impacts to the Highland neighborhood, particularly the increased traffic on Pine Street, which is currently a minor arterial. There was a concern that traffic connecting directly to Liberty/Commercial and Broadway would constitute a barrier within the neighborhood.

- There was concern from some Oversight Team members about the impact to businesses on both sides of the river.
- It was noted that local traffic may be more likely to utilize current businesses since they wouldn't be competing with through-traffic and freight.
- A few of the Oversight Team members said that Alternative 4D would have less of an impact to the Highland neighborhood since there would be a direct connection to Salem Parkway, which would reduce cut through traffic in the neighborhood.
- Cathy Clark asked if the connection to OR 22 were to be added in the future, would it require another EIS?
 - Rod Thompson said that if the alternative selected includes the OR 22 connection, there is a three year grace period from the issue of the Record of Decision (ROD) to when design needs to begin; if there is more time without action then the project needs to be re-evaluated to see if the document and alternative are still valid.
- Dan Clem asked, if the preferred alternative were Alternative 4D and it were phased, whether less could be done?
 - Rod said that the group could suggest a hybrid alternative; such as a phased approach for the preferred alternative, to address some of the concerns mentioned earlier.

Alternative 4B

Dave clarified that although this alternative was eliminated by the Task Force, Alternative 4B was on the table for consideration at the start of the last Task Force meeting, so that is why it was included in the Feedback Memo. Those Task Force Members in favor of 4B expressed a desire to see improvements made to the existing bridges along with an additional crossing option that would provide for greater connectivity in the future.

- There was some discussion among the Oversight Team about the differences between what was included in Alternative 2A and what was recommended in the Bridgehead Engineering Study – and that most of the improvements recommended in the Bridgehead Engineering Study have been implemented since 1998. Distinction was made between the Bridgehead Engineering Study and the additional improvements suggested in Alternative 2A.

Alternative 4D

Dave said that Alternative 4D provides all of the connectivity improvements possible in the corridor to reduce congestion and improve mobility but that this alternative is the most expensive of those advanced by the Task Force.

Task Force members opposed to Alternative 4D expressed concerns about its cost/benefit when one considers the reduced travel times in relation to the estimated traffic volume questions raised earlier.

Task Force neighborhood representatives were concerned about this alternative because of the direct impacts to the three eastside neighborhoods.

- There was a question from an Oversight Team member if the Highland neighborhood was in the urban renewal area.
 - Julie clarified that the downtown urban renewal area extended only to Market/Broadway streets currently, but extended new urban renewal area could be considered in the future.
- Cathy Clark mentioned that the City of Keizer has concerns about the northeast Salem neighborhoods as they develop the Keizer Comprehensive Plan. She asked if there is a way for the City of Salem to work with the eastside neighborhoods affected by Alternative 4D as they continue to evolve and the housing stock in the area changes.
 - Julie noted that Cathy Clark's suggestion could be a recommendation from Salem City Council if the Oversight Team moves forward with a recommendation of Alternative 4D. Julie noted that the City could work with the affected neighborhoods to find the best redevelopment options for the area.
- Sonny Chickering questioned the funding situation and how the debate on cost went with the Task Force.
 - Dave reminded Oversight Team members that funding was discussed two years ago with this body and that the Oversight Team provided direction to focus on preferred alternative selection before discussing funding solutions. Dave then noted that there was some frustration among Task Force members about the lack of detail regarding funding, since this decision structure is different from personal or business decision-making procedures that most people use, and it is therefore counter-intuitive. Dave noted that a few Task Force members mentioned a preference of alternatives based discretely on cost, but that no Task Force members disputed the validity of the cost estimates themselves.
- Sonny asked if any Task Force members expressed concerns about the construction duration (2-5 years).
 - Dave noted that no concerns about construction impacts were raised; concerns focused on the permanent impacts.
- Craig Pope said that cost is an issue and that he is getting pressure from constituents to pick the best alternative and find a way to pay for it. He asked if there will be refinements to the cost and funding strategies now.
 - Dan Fricke said that the DEIS estimates are planning-level cost estimates, which include general and construction contingencies in 2015 dollars. Cost estimate refinement isn't anticipated at this time.

- Julie noted that the next step will be to develop a funding strategy that would be complete at the same time as the Final EIS.
- *Craig requested to receive the cost estimate breakdown to help the discussion of alternative selection at this time.*
 - Dave noted that after the preferred alternative is selected and engineering design advanced there can be more detailed cost estimates made (closer to construction). If the selected alternative is over \$100 million a finance plan is required, so there will be further discussion regarding local funding sources.
 - Dan Fricke said that once the alternative is selected this project will be similar to other projects, just at a larger scale. The project needs to make a good effort to articulate how funding for construction phases will be secured in order to get the ROD, but that the project does not have to have funding for the entire project secured.
- There was a concern among some Oversight Team members about the certainty of federal and state funding sources and that construction phasing may cause cost increases over time.

Dave quickly addressed the other handouts, including a general summary of public comments and a staff summary of the Draft EIS findings (this data was used by the Task Force); there were no questions from the Oversight Team about this material.

The Oversight Team requested the following information pieces:

- A handout showing the reasoning behind why the Task Force eliminated the alternatives they did.
- Cost estimate methodology.
- Summary of the pair-wise approach used by the Task Force to narrow the alternatives.
- Assumptions called out in the Alternate Modes Study, regarding the mode split and ways to reach those targets

There was a request by an Oversight Team member for the project team to clarify the feelings of the Oversight Team regarding the remaining alternatives. There was some discussion about the possibility of adding bike/pedestrian connections at Wallace Road and the Salem Parkway – it was suggested that adding this improvement may help the project gather funding from more sources. However, there was some disagreement about this suggestion. Dave mentioned that the group can discuss refinements such as these at future meetings.

- Cathy Clark suggested that members ask their agencies if it is better to tackle pedestrian/bike improvements on their own or within the context of the larger Salem River Crossing project.

There was further discussion regarding the addition of discrete transit improvements to the project so as to secure dedicated transit funds. However, the majority of the group voiced the

opinion that the project needs to focus on vehicular traffic in general and to stick with the alternatives as they were studied in the Draft EIS.

A straw poll was conducted regarding forwarding Alternative 4D, without any modifications, as the preliminary preferred alternative recommendation; all Oversight Team members agreed to this except Bob Krebs. Bob noted that he was not opposed to Alternative 4D, but without discrete transit improvements he felt the project was overspending to solve the problem.

Public Comment

- Scott Bassett thanked the group for fine tuning the alternatives and he said it looked like there was a preliminary recommendation.
- Russell Beaton thanked the project team for accurately representing the Task Force opinions.

Next Steps

Dave reminded the group that the process over the coming months will be for the Oversight Team members to discuss the project and preliminary alternative recommendation with their respective agencies and their constituents.

Additional information requested by the Oversight Team, as described earlier, will be distributed to the group. Dave noted that if anyone would like the project team to make a presentation to their agency to please let the team know. Dave suggested that, from a scheduling perspective, it would be beneficial if the counties could wait to meet until after the City of Salem has a chance to discuss the alternatives, since the City of Salem has the most complex process and a corresponding large amount of concern within their constituency – this approach will also help the other agencies understand the concerns of the citizens in Salem before making a recommendation.