



Oversight Team meeting summary

ATTENDEES:	Kevin Cameron (filling in for Sam Brentano/ Marion County Commissioner)	Dan Clem/ Salem City Councilor	Bob Krebs/ Salem Area Mass Transit District, Board of Directors
	Cathy Clark/ Keizer City Councilor	Sonny Chickering/ ODOT	Emily Lawton/ FHWA
			Craig Pope/ Polk County Commissioner
STAFF PARTICIPANTS:	Dan Fricke/ ODOT	Mike Jaffe/ Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments	Michael Hoffmann/ CH2M HILL
	Rod Thompson/ ODOT		Brandy Steffen/ CH2M HILL
	Julie Warncke/ City of Salem	Dave Simmons/ CH2M HILL	Mike Bartholomew/ CH2M HILL
GUESTS:	Public: Michael Rose/Statesman Journal; Tim Potter/ODOT; Karen Odenthal/SKATS; Richard Schmidt/SKATS; Jim Lewis; Roberta Cade; Jim Scheppeke, Sarah Deumling; Mayann Beirne; Scott Bassett; Leonard Wilkerson; Mikal Mitchell; and Emily Loberg		
DATE:	Thursday, June 26, 2014 Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments Office		

Introduction

Dave Simmons welcomed the group and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He then reviewed the agenda, noting that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss bridge types, provide direction for additional study and briefly review the process for identifying project funding. The Oversight Team (OT) members and staff participants introduced themselves. There were no changes to the February 6, 2014 meeting summary (the Cherriots Preferred Alternative adoption language was emailed to the OT members for review after the meeting).

Statements from the public in attendance

Dave reviewed the ground rules for the public comments, asking the public to respect the time limit of two minutes each. Below are summaries of each commenter.

- ◆ **Roberta Cade:** In opposition to the bridge. Concerned about the bridge being built in an earthquake liquefaction zone and if it is built, it should be built to withstand a level 9 earthquake. However, the money should be spent to retrofit the existing bridges. Increasing public transit would reduce the need for a new bridge. Also concerned about the heron rookery on McLane Island.
- ◆ **Emily Loberg:** In opposition to the bridge. The project is unnecessary and harmful to the mobility, safety, and vitality of the city. The bridge favors high-speed through-traffic at the expense of local and residential traffic, as well as other travel modes including the under-funded transit system. Concerns about earthquake safety. The project encourages unhealthy personal and environmental behaviors. Traffic has decreased even as the city has grown and there are more effective solutions that cost less.
- ◆ **Scott Bassett:** This is the eighth year of a two-year process and we are finally talking about design. Salem City Council wanted fewer piers – please ask about mitigation efforts if you look at options with more piers. Look at the impacts to the flood plain. Expand the project area to include the Rosemont Avenue off-ramp, you need to discuss the impacts of that decision on the neighborhood as you make your recommendation.
- ◆ **Jim Lewis:** You are representing common sense that there is a need to move forward with a new bridge. In my time talking with West Salem residents it was clear that people wanted another bridge; I ran on that position and was successful. It's clear to me and the residents that I spoke with that the crossing is needed now; speed up the process and get it funded.
- ◆ **Sarah Deumling:** I work in rural Polk County and live in West Salem. I like this area, but this project is a throwback and not a progressive project for the city. I welcome substantive conversations to talk about this project to understand why you think it's a good idea to have a bridge. Please review the article I distributed.

Review comments received to date on the Preferred Alternative

The project team presented the Preferred Alternative to the Collaborative Environmental and Transportation Agreement for Streamlining (CETAS) group on May 13, 2014, as part of a regulatory milestone concurrence point meeting. At this point the project has received concurrence letters from each CETAS agency except for one (Department of Land Conservation and Development - DLCD). These letters state that the agencies don't have major concerns with the Preferred Alternative from a permitting perspective.

- ◆ The project team will contact the OT when all of the concurrence letters are received.

Dave reviewed the public comments that have been collected to-date; the comment period closed on June 30, 2014. The public open house was held on June 11, 2014. Approximately 150 people attended the event, with 129 people signed-in. Attendees provided a variety of perspectives. The comments and questions submitted by June 26 include:

- ◆ **Funding questions** (Who is paying? What is the funding plan? Will there be a tax or toll?)

- ◆ If funds could be used to **earthquake retrofit** the existing bridges
- ◆ The need for **alternative transportation** (better bus service, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure)
- ◆ **Project is long overdue** (need to alleviate traffic congestion and redirect traffic out of downtown)
- ◆ **Neighborhood livability concerns** (Mitigation costs, displacements, business impacts, cut-through traffic)
- ◆ **Highway 22 Rosemont Avenue exit ramp closure** and impacts to **Edgewater Business District**

The OT clarified, and were in agreement, that closing the Rosemont exit ramp is only acceptable as a last resort after an expressway management plan (EMP) is completed by ODOT. The OT then discussed the following items:

- ◆ A request was made for information to share with the public about the current seismic retrofit for the existing bridges and pavement projects that are taking place, specifically related to the existing bridges.
 - Marion Street Bridge was repaved two years ago. A resiliency plan is going to the Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation (MWACT) for review on August 7th at the SKATS office at 3:30 pm.
- ◆ There was a request to consider a different name for the project (instead of “Salem River Crossing”) to make it more regionally focused and would help frame future discussions related to funding and construction.
 - The project name will need to be used for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), but the team can consider a name change for other future uses.

Discuss bridge types

Dave explained that the project team has been refining potential bridge types for OT review and reminded the group of the 2008 discussion on bridge type that resulted in the use of a beam/girder bridge type concept in the Draft EIS. Based on previous discussions, the team is presenting Final EIS conceptual bridge types now, with the intent that the OT will subsequently decide on a bridge type to be studied in the Final EIS. Dave explained that this decision doesn't prevent the community from revisiting the bridge type in the future, though that may require a re-evaluation or supplemental EIS if revisions are substantial. Dave noted that biological and other analyses to be conducted for the Final EIS requires a review of the pier locations, coordination with the Coast Guard, and bridge type cost estimates, but that there would be flexibility afterward with regard to deciding on bridge design/aesthetics.

The project team considered the following elements as part of an initial screening, which resulted in five bridge types:

- ◆ Minimization of in-water piers (considered from bank to bank)

- ◆ Aesthetic bridge type (above deck features)
- ◆ Horizontal and vertical clearance maximums
- ◆ Vertical clearance constraints on Front Street
- ◆ Preservation of west channel for primary navigation (and also east channel if possible)

Dave asked the group to consider reducing the five bridge types to two or three for further study. The OT was not asked to select a preferred bridge type. The group took a break for lunch before Dave explained the five bridge types and answered questions (summarized below):

- ◆ **Alternative 1: Cable-Stayed**
 - Concerns regarding the flight path of the Salem Airport in relationship to the 300' tower.
- ◆ Request to see the flight heights; to use when comparing remaining bridge types.
 - A shorter tower on each bank would not work because of the short distance on the eastside (there needs to be more back space for the cable-stay to work) or else the piers would need to be placed in the middle of the channels.
- ◆ **Alternative 2: Steel Tied Arch**
 - Bridge types can be mixed/combined to reduce overall cost.
- ◆ **Alternative 3: Cast-in-place Segmental Concrete Box Girder**
 - This is the bridge type that is most similar to the one used in the Draft EIS; all bridge types have a smaller footprint than the footprint assumed in the Draft EIS.
- ◆ **Alternative 4: 4a) Steel Girder or 4b) Segmental Precast Concrete Box**
 - Precast bridge types reduce overall cost.
- ◆ **Alternative 5: Precast Concrete T-Girder**

The cost for the main bridge span (over the river channel; from west abutment to the eastside of Front Street) as outlined in the Draft EIS (\$150M) fits in the mid-range of the five bridge types (\$120-170M).

The group then discussed which bridge types don't make sense for further study and those that should be studied more with respect to construction cost, pier size and placement, and natural resource constraints.

- ◆ The group agreed that Alternative 1 is too tall/infeasible and dismissed it from further study.
- ◆ The group agreed that a combination of Alternative 2 should be studied – combining a single-tied arch over the west channel and girder style over the east channel

(similar to the Sauvie Island Bridge in Portland). They also want to further study the existing Alternative 2 (with two tied arches – one over each channel).

- ◆ The group agreed to have the project team further study Alternatives 3, 4a, and 4b.
- ◆ The group discussed the pros and cons of Alternative 5; specifically that it had a greater number of piers than the others but at a much lower cost. Several members felt that this type did not meet the criteria of “reducing the number of piers in the water.” The group agreed to dismiss the Precast Concrete T-Girder bridge type (Alternative 5) from further study as the main bridge type.
 - The Precast Concrete T-Girder bridge type will be used for the elevated structure over the floodplain on the west side of the river (which is about half of the total elevated bridge structure). The OT was informed that they could consider a different bridge type in this area (which would affect the overall project cost).

The group also raised the following comments or concerns:

- ◆ The shortest span length could only be 130’ – this distance is based on the existing Union Street Pedestrian Bicycle Bridge span lengths. All of the alternatives meet this requirement.
- ◆ There is a big range in cost between Alternatives 2 and 5; need to be mindful that the taxpayers will be paying for this project.
- ◆ The natural amenities and view around the bridge should be considered. Focus attention on the bridgeheads/ approaches and minimize impacts from bridge structure to the view corridors.
- ◆ Need to consider the political feasibility of the bridge type, particularly if the bridge type is reasonably priced, while simultaneously meeting EIS and permitting requirements.

Discuss funding process

Dave reviewed the project staff recommendation for a process to discuss funding. A financial plan will be developed for the project that will include phasing options and will be used as an accountability document for the local and regional partners. The draft will be done this fall and will be finalized early next year. Part of the funding process will be a funding workshop, which will be used to educate local officials and other stakeholders on the range of possible funding sources. The travel demand model is being updated and will be used for the funding discussion, particularly with regard to traffic volumes for tolling and other mechanisms that require knowledge of where demand is coming from. The project team is currently compiling an invitation list. The workshop is anticipated to be held in fall and will entail small group discussions (using an updated online funding tool) to compile feedback on potential funding strategies. After the workshop, the OT will meet again to provide the project team guidance on funding strategies to include in the financial plan.

The group raised the following comments or concerns:

- ◆ When will the travel demand model be done? Can we accelerate the funding discussion timeline?
 - The project team will move as quickly as possible but the current timeline is for a funding workshop in September/October, an OT meeting in mid-November, and a final OT meeting in January.
- ◆ Will the Task Force members be invited to attend?
 - The invitation list may include some of the Task Force members, but not all of them. It will be a bigger group, including transit interests.
- ◆ The construction phasing element is a key to the project. Please make it clear in the workshop and financial plan that it's not necessary to use all of the funding mechanisms for each phase. That will allow more controversial mechanisms to be considered for future phases. The project team doesn't want to make it seem like it's all or nothing, or that the only way to pay for the bridge is with tolling.
 - Agreed, the scope and scale of the project will be discussed in phases.
- ◆ Hopefully by the time of preparing the financial plan the federal MAP 21 reauthorization issue will be resolved.

Statements from the public in attendance

Dave reviewed the ground rules for the public comments, asking the public to respect the time limit of two minutes each. Below are summaries of each commenter.

- ◆ **Jim Scheppke:** What will the public participation be for the funding workshop? Before the workshop the OT needs to consider using the scientific telephone survey of citizens that is described in the current contractor's work order. It should include 20-25 questions to help understand what people think. There is not a consensus about the bridge and funding; going into a funding workshop without knowledge would be a waste of time. Do it in the next few months.
- ◆ **Maryann Beirne:** I live in NE Salem and wear the button; people still don't know what the 3rd bridge is. After the open house you had 100 comments but it's not a valid data point. I came from Seattle and there is no traffic here. My friends in Seattle live on a road that cars use to avoid a tolled bridge. Need to think about a toll on the Marion, Center, Independence, and new bridges to avoid toll evasion. Having all raised structure on the west side is creating housing for homeless people and more problems in West Salem; it increases the cost for police and attracts more homeless people.
- ◆ **Leonard Wilkerson:** It's reassuring that you are being given good information, but you haven't been provided the annualized maintenance cost of the bridge types. Agencies will look at maintaining this "bridge-osaurus" for another 50 years and that annualized cost is much higher than anticipated.
- ◆ **Scott Bassett:** In 2008 you didn't have a good plan to pay for the bridge. You're getting close and cost realities have changed. The design is lopsided (west end at-

grade at Marine, east over-pass Pine Street). If you need a local bridge height you should include an intersection at Front Street; it would be better like Marine Drive. The flood impacts have not been discussed. There are 38 piers in the floodway in the Draft EIS. It doesn't matter where the low water mark is, it's the floodway and floodplain. It's misleading to talk about the piers on this level, I'm really interested in the mitigation you will need to do based on a 4" rise in water levels.

Next steps

Dave said that the staff will work with stakeholders to make design refinements to the alternative's footprint, which is needed for the environmental analysis. The project team will refine the remaining bridge types to get more detail for the OT's consideration at the next meeting. Having the discussion around the bridge type will allow the team to discuss construction phasing for the project. The project team is also doing field work, which will go into the Final EIS. CETAS concurrence on the Preferred Alternative is nearly complete. Finally, Dave added that local land use approvals will be taking place during this time.

Dave thanked the group and the public for attending and ended the meeting.