



Oversight Team meeting summary

ATTENDEES:

Sam Brentano/ Marion County Commissioner	Sonny Chickering/ ODOT	Michael Morrow (filling in for Emily Lawton)/ FHWA
Cathy Clark/ Keizer City Councilor	Bob Krebs/ Salem Area Mass Transit District, Board of Directors	Craig Pope/Polk County Commissioner
Dan Clem/ Salem City Councilor		

STAFF PARTICIPANTS:

Dan Fricke/ ODOT	Mike Jaffe/ Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments	Michael Hoffmann/ CH2M HILL
Anna Henson/ ODOT		Brenda Martin/ CH2M HILL
Julie Warncke/ City of Salem	Dave Simmons/ CH2M HILL	

GUESTS: Karen Odenthal/SKATS; Brian Hines; Keith Kohan; Maryann Baclawski; Roberta Cade; Ron Campbell; Renee Campbell; Jim Scheppke; Dan Tompkins; Jan Barga; Maryann Beirne; Sandra Deumling; J Gear; Emily Loberg; Mikal Mitchell, Frances Loberg; Amy McLoide; Tom Andersen; Justin Dorning; Ed Chamberlain; Scott Bassett; Jim Lewis; Jason Brandt

DATE: Thursday, December 11, 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 the two funding workshops that had taken place the week previous and to start discussing a funding strategy for the Salem River Crossing Project. The Oversight Team (OT) members and staff participants introduced themselves. There were no changes to the September 18, 2014 meeting summary.

Statements from the public in attendance

Dave reviewed the ground rules for the public comments, asking the public to attempt to not repeat comments stated at the funding workshops and to respect the time limit of two minutes each. Below are summaries of each commenter.

Comments were read by five community members. A brief synopsis is found below:

- ◆ **Brian Hines** discussed his attendance at the funding workshop. He felt that people at his table wanted to improve the existing bridges and not fund the new bridge since maintenance is supposed to be the state priority. He stated that, based on his calculations, if only people crossing the bridge paid for it, they would be paying \$20 per trip.
- ◆ **Maryann Baclawski** felt that her comments may not be appropriate since it seemed like the team's minds were made up, but she does not want the bridge built. She stated her concern with people who are homeless, including the children living in poverty. She mentioned how much was being spent per month on this project and how that money could be focused on helping people who are homeless. The money could be put to better use.
- ◆ **Renee Campbell** lives in Keizer and works in Salem. She also participated at the funding workshop and said that she knew that the event was meant to be an exercise and participants were told that it was meant to be used to look at funding sources. Her table of participants were in favor of tolls over property taxes. They also discussed that there should be a residence card that would help reduce the cost to neighborhoods. Overall, she felt that the funding workshop exercise was valuable.
- ◆ **Tom Andersen** is a new city councilor in Salem, coming into office in January. In his race, he was the only one that opposed the bridge. The other candidates were for the bridge. He attended the funding workshop and was the only elected official at his table, everyone else were business owners. He felt that since a property tax, gas tax and vehicle registration fee would have to be passed by the voters, they would never pass. He is a bicycle rider and thinks the project will not help bicyclists. Bicyclists would not use this bridge and pedestrians wouldn't use it either.
- ◆ **Sarah Deumling** owns a home in West Salem and has a business in Polk County. She stated that both the federal and state government (ODOT) have made existing highway infrastructure repair and maintenance their first priority. She thinks that given the City of Salem has limited funds, why would they spend large amounts of taxpayer money for a bridge that local residents may not want. She wants to know if people want the bridge at all before decisions are made as to how to finance the project.

Discuss funding workshop

Dave explained the summary from the two funding workshops that took place on December 3, 2014. He discussed the number of people that attended the workshops, the number of comments submitted, and the funding scenarios completed. He also reviewed the workshop outcomes including the funding sources discussed and the different scenarios completed by participants.

- ◆ **Dan Clem** asked for clarification on why there were fewer scenarios in the evening workshop. He wanted to know if people in attendance did not want to complete a scenario at the event.
 - Dave Simmons clarified that yes, participants in the evening workshop submitted fewer scenarios overall because some did not want to participate in the creation of scenarios.
- ◆ **Dan Clem** suggested looking at other projects being built and their contribution from federal and state funding sources. Looking at Sellwood Bridge and the I-5 Bridge in Eugene as

examples, he suggested percentages that might work for local, state and federal funding contribution levels; he suggested 50% local and 25% each for state and federal.

- ◆ **Dave Simmons** took a moment to clarify that during the funding workshops, it was incorrectly announced that a local gas tax would not require a public vote – but as a result of 2009 legislation, a local gas tax must actually be approved by voters. He also clarified that in past discussions it was stated that a financial plan was required in order to secure a Record-of-Decision (ROD), but the guidance for financial plans has changed and a financial plan is now not required prior to the signing of the ROD. He stated that what the team *will* need to do is develop a financial strategy. He stated that the goal of the present meeting was to work toward the development of a broad funding strategy as a starting point. This strategy would be documented in a memorandum and provided to FHWA.
 - **Michael Morrow** mentioned that a strategy for the next phase and a good faith commitment to funding sources would be needed.
 - **Dan Clem** also mentioned that some component needs to be added to the RTSP and the TIP. That could potentially be Marine Drive since it is already in the city of Salem’s TSP.
 - **Craig Pope** stated that he agreed that the workshop was an exercise and part of what the project team had to do was complete the EIS process. He stated that his main focus was being practical. He felt that there was much work to do between the current funding exercise and the point at which future elected officials would need to make financial decisions to make the SRC project a reality. He stated that he did not believe that all of the revenue sources are probable, but there are some that are possible, and that the OT needed to discuss practicality and talk about which funding elements would have the potential to succeed. The CRC has heightened the conversation on tolling – and even though there are concerns about it the OT still needs to have the discussion.
- ◆ **Dan Clem** suggested keeping the financial plan broad and general so that future elected officials could work on what they believed voters would approve.

Funding strategy discussion

Using information derived from the workshop, the group discussion shifted to funding strategies. The OT also discussed potential project construction phasing.

- ◆ **Dan Clem** talked about the Marine Drive phases and mentioned that they could be funded through a Salem property tax; he noted that a similar transportation-related property tax had been approved in Salem in the recent past.
- ◆ **Cathy Clark** added that both Marine Drive phases would need to be built in concurrence with the Ramp phase in order to get regional buy-in, and that there is a clear need for a connection to Highway 22. She stated that the OT needs to think of the project as regional and that the

construction of Marine Drive would help with bridge traffic, which is regional. If phases were to be constructed separately, people may get used to Marine Drive being a local street. She stated that it is regional buy-in that could help build Phase R and M phases together.

- ◆ **Sam Brentano** stated that all the phases need to be constructed. If you have no federal or state commitment then this project can't happen. Marine Drive has value and is in the City's plan – it is the one piece that is local and would probably get funded differently.
- ◆ **Dan Clem** mentioned that some of the funding to construct Marine Drive funding would potentially come from exactions on developers; overall project funding could be a combination of public and private funds.
- ◆ **Cathy Clark** stated that her preference was for constructing all phases concurrently in a short time period – this would help to quickly create a safer and more efficient system for drivers and bikes/pedestrians.

The group moved on to talk about similarities with other projects in the state.

- ◆ **Craig Pope** asked Sonny Chickering about the similarities this project might have with the Newberg-Dundee Bypass. He wanted to know what this project might be able to learn, in particular regarding the question of the availability of state and federal financial contributions.
 - **Sonny Chickering** discussed the financing of the Newberg-Dundee Bypass Project with the group. He mentioned that the project was currently only constructing an initial phase and that funding has not yet been secured for the other phases of Newberg-Dundee. For the current phase that is being built, it has been split into five contracts. Small contracts have helped the region hire smaller, local firms who can provide the necessary construction bond. Currently, \$40 million is going through the Jos and Transportation Act (JTA) bond program. Newberg, Dundee, and the Grand Ronde Tribe are all making contributions.
 - **Sonny** also stated that in terms of the funding chart being presently discussed [*chart can be found in the financial strategy memo*], one of the sources the group could look at for funding is the STIP. It would probably take six or seven years to accumulate approximately \$30-\$50 million through future anticipated allocations to the MWACT; that would be about \$4-\$5 million from the state and about \$40 million from the federal government.

The group compiled a funding chart that can be found in the funding strategy memo.

After a short break the group convened to discuss different funding amounts for each funding source and phase. The committee looked at ranges for each funding sources and talked about what amount and sources made the most sense for the phase and the project as a whole.

- ◆ **Cathy Clark** liked Sonny's point on breaking up the project into smaller construction pieces in order to hire local firms and bring jobs to the region.
 - **Dave Simmons** agreed that the project could be broken into separate construction phases and further broken down, for example, by right-of-way acquisition, design and/or construction cost.
- ◆ **Dan Clem** stated that he would advocate for lower toll rates for low-income bridge users if a toll were to be utilized.

The group moved on to discuss tolling and where most traffic was being generated.

- ◆ **Mike Jaffe** noted that there are particular origin-destination trip movements on the bridge: local (meaning inside the Salem-Keizer urban area) on both points of a trip, local on one trip end (either destination or origin), and through-trips. He noted that roughly 55% of the trips have both a local origin and destination, according to a survey in the mid-1990s.

After deciding on a conceptual funding strategy, the group discussed what was needed to get a ROD for the project.

- ◆ **Julie Warncke** clarified that the conceptual funding strategy did not equate to a commitment of state or local monies, but rather it is a realistic strategy on how the project could be funded, based on examples of how other recent large projects have been funded. Julie noted that the Preferred Alternative would be added into the city of Salem TSP and that the financial strategy memo, with funding scenario table included, would be forwarded to Salem City Council for their information.
- ◆ **Mike Jaffe** added that there has to be a funded project phase in the SKATS regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the project to get a record of decision (ROD) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Statements from the public in attendance

- ◆ **Dan Tompkins** is a Salem resident and No on 3rd Bridge supporter. He stated that the project could cost up to \$500 a year to the community, if the funding strategy includes tolls, property tax, gas tax, and vehicle registration. He noted that some of the fees and taxes require voter approval and wanted to know how the region will pay for the bridge if the voters don't approve it. He stated that public opinion is to use taxes for schools and existing infrastructure and make the existing bridges safe in an earthquake. He noted that the monthly cost for this project is more than some make a year.
- ◆ **Roberta Cade** stated that she hasn't heard at any meeting or at the funding exercises what it would cost to build a bridge to withstand a 9.5 earthquake. She understands it would be cost-prohibitive, but if a bridge is being built, it doesn't make sense to her for that bridge to not be able to handle a 9.5 event. She stated that the existing bridges have not been retrofitted. She

noted that three of the four funding sources discussed need voter approval, so why not ask the public now so that the project team knows how much money it will need. She also wanted to know the cost of the project's urban growth boundary expansion process. She noted that she pays state and federal tax and both factor into project funding.

- ◆ **Maryann Beirne** lives in NE Salem, and she attended both sessions of the funding workshop. She discussed what she believed to be the most important points about the evening workshop. She stated that as a scientist, she believed the results from the two workshops weren't valid since they were not conducted the same way. She recounted how the evening workshop went, about how participants asked many questions on different topics of the project - but that in the afternoon session participants were more willing to be led through a process. She believes that the public challenged the presenters. She stated that the participants in the evening workshop were not encouraged to fill out public comment sheets.
- ◆ **Scott Bassett** noted that he has been tracking this project for a few years and was glad the group is finally talking about funding. He discussed a memo released in November, 2014 by EcoNorthwest that looked at the forecast of users for the next 20 years. They looked at a \$1 toll and stated that it would generate anywhere from \$30 million to \$45 million, but that 10% of the toll would be needed to pay for operation and maintenance costs. He stated that the region would be relying on a toll to create revenue, but that the toll would cut the forecast use of the bridges. He stated that that decisions should be made on what is being forecasted, especially as noted in the EcoNorthwest memo; he stated his hope that OT members read the memo.
- ◆ **Jim Lewis** stated that it was his perception that local funding could be achieved. He stated that the region passed a \$99 million dollar street improvement bond in the past, even when polls said it wouldn't pass. He noted that he wants to see the project move forward now because costs will only continue to rise in the future.
- ◆ **Jason Brandt** is the CEO of the Salem Area Chamber of Commerce. He commended the OT on their work and commitment to the project. He noted that he participated in the funding workshop and at his table the participants thought the first phase was very palatable. He noted that his organization did a poll which found that 65% of respondents supported a third bridge. He told the OT that his organization could assist them in a funding campaign for the project.
- ◆ **Jim Scheppke** lives in Salem and is a No on 3rd bridge supporter. He stated that what the audience was just told by Mr. Brandt was not true, that the Chamber did not do a real survey but rather it was a robo-call that asked only one question. He asked the OT to have the consultant conduct a scientific opinion poll that he believed would show that people do not want this bridge and don't want to pay for it.

Additional written testimony can be found at the end of this summary.

Technical update

Dave reviewed conceptual bicycle and pedestrian design for facilities on the west and east side of the bridgehead. The group asked him questions about the maps presented and on the bicycle/pedestrian facilities being proposed along at bridgeheads.

Next steps

Dave thanked the group and the public for attending. He discussed next steps. The group asked about the next steps for the Final environmental Impact Statement (FEIS.)

- **Michael Hoffmann** clarified that a kick-off of for the environmental analysts would likely occur early in the new year. He noted that some of the EIS discipline analysts would need to gather fresh data and/or revise methodologies due to the time gap between the current time and when the DEIS was published. He noted the FEIS technical reports would be prepared by the end of 2015 and that the FEIS document would be drafted in 2016.

Sarah Deumling

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Salem River Crossing Oversight Team

Both the federal government and the state government (ODOT) have arrived at the conclusion that existing highway infrastructure repair and maintenance are the first priority for the limited funds available.

Given the fact that the City of Salem also has limited funds how have you – who decide such things – come to the conclusion that we should spend large amounts of taxpayer/citizen money for a big new bridge complex that we are not even sure the local public wants?

It seems compellingly obvious to me that this question should be answered before decisions are made as to how to finance this project.

Please find out if you have wide public support for this project. Please examine you collective consciences to determine what it is that make priorities in Salem so different than federal and state priorities.

Thank you.

Salem River Crossing Oversight Meeting
December 11, 2014
Public Comment 1 from Maryann Beirne, NE Salem resident

There is NO money. Stop this process now! Stop Spending more money!

Unlike the governmental officials on this Committee, I got to go to both sessions of the Funding Workshop. Let me describe some salient points about the evening session with the public.

Dan and Julie did the welcome and "focus on funding only" talk and then handed everything over to Dave Simmons and the CH2M Hill folks. Dave started into his overview presentation and revised funding explanation ^{different from} as he did for the afternoon session except he was pelted with questions from all over the audience on bonding methods and which taxes had to be put up for a vote and how would this affect Salem's borrowing ability in the future, and what would happen to our city if we defaulted on the payments and whether the costs included repair and maintenance for years to come. All of which lead to a much longer session than was planned for by the consultants.

I found it interesting that in the afternoon session with our governmental "leaders" they were more willing to let themselves be managed and shepherded by consultants to go through a process than the evening gathering of the "public" who challenged the presenters and eventually got tired of the game because they could see that they couldn't "win". The consultants didn't do much to encourage folks to fill out the public comment sheets or make an effort to collect them at the evening session.

I had a brief conversation with Brian Dalton, mayor of Dallas about the session we had with the ODOT engineer on earthquake readiness of our Bridges and the Lifeline routes proposed for the west side. He told me that they are ready for the big earthquake and that they don't need our bridges because **they will use 99W just like they always did before I-5 was built**. So what's the argument for getting a third bridge built for the sake of Dallas and Monmouth and points west? The Dundee By-Pass is taking care of that need and it's under construction now.

How do we stop our official "Leaders" from continuing to pay CH2M Hill about \$62,000./mo. for a project that has no way to be paid for? Our "leaders" seem to be focused on "doing their process" rather than the reality -- **there is no money**. CH2M Hill wants to prolong this process and keep collecting their fees. So are you going to spend another \$Million for this dead horse so we can hang around with each other and have lunch with the folks from CH2M Hill?

Stop this project right now. This has been a huge waste of time and money.

Salem River Crossing Oversight Meeting
December 11, 2014
Public Comment 2 from Maryann Beirne, NE Salem resident

The U S Gov runs into a similar problem in technology development for Federal agencies. It's called the Technology Readiness Level. It is a nine step process from hair-brained, wild idea to fielded technology.

There is no exit path along the way. Once a technology is considered, it continues until lack of funding starves it to death, because there is no off-ramp in the process. There is only success. There is no failure.

"Shall we play a game?"

In the 1983 movie *Wargames*, it took a computer nearly becoming sentient by trying thousands of game scenarios to realize there was no way to "win" a thermonuclear war. No matter how the game was played the result guaranteed a loss. The only way to win was to never make the first move, to never 'play the game', to take an exit path, the off ramp.

You were beat at the first step - accepting the "Funding computer game" scenario. We plugged in numbers for property taxes, registration fees, gas taxes and tolls. Mayors proclaimed that property taxes were a killer and raised tolls and registration fees. Other officials raised property taxes and registration fees and tolls. We all got to see that tolls added up so we could get to the \$46 million and "Win". The public plugged in gas taxes and saw that they didn't do much, then registration fees but didn't add much, reluctantly added property taxes and didn't like that, plugged in tolls and saw the revenue pile up but then calculated out how much it would cost per year per family and it added up to more than their property taxes. Not wanting to pay for any of the costs, the public lost interest in the game and started to leave the event. They took the off-ramp which everyone sitting around these tables is unwilling to do. At this point the only winning moves in this game are all zeros, \$0 added to registrations, \$0 for tolls, \$0 for property tax, and \$0 on gas tax: Result \$46 million shortfall. Success. You've solved the game by not building the bridge. You can stop the process.

What the 'decision makers' don't get is that by following the process they are on a path of failure. It will burden business and the communities and lead to de-growth rather than growth.

My name is Roberta Cade

Given:

1. ODOT confirmed state and federal funding trends are down, the bridge will not receive much, if any, funding from state and federal coffers, and therefore it is Marion and Polk County residents who would bear the brunt of the cost of building it;
2. it is clear many people want the bridge in order to by-pass Salem;
3. studies confirm automobile traffic is down nationwide – and bridge studies on our two existing bridges verify – compared to Seattle etc, we have no traffic flow problem;
4. the new construction at Wallace and Glen Creek has not alleviated the real problem, traffic is still tied up on most feeder streets, the real problem is feeder street and ramp congestion, not the bridges;
5. raising funds through property taxes and DMV registration fees is a non-starter because to raise funds from those two sources must be voted on by people who will rarely or never use the bridge;
6. newer cars get better mileage, raising gasoline taxes would not generate the anticipated funds as the better mileage will bring drivers to the pumps less often;
7. tolling cars could cost a family in West Salem upwards of \$3000 a year – an extreme cost burden – and therefore property values are likely to fall, and many West Salem residents (children) would likely become less active, perhaps leading to health issues;
8. there's no evidence that all government CEO's, including Governor Kitzhaber, have been brought together to discuss a mandatory – not just voluntary – staggering of government employees' work hours;
9. there's no evidence of changing the direction of one lane on each bridge to the opposite direction during rush hour;
10. adding bus and/or other public transportation has not been adequately discussed;
11. there's no evidence that the increase in CO2, if more and more drivers are encouraged to drive, has been considered;
12. the chosen location for the bridge demands it is a longer bridge than would need to be if built elsewhere, and therefore more costly;

13. the new bridge as well as the railroad bridge, touted to be the emergency lane in an emergency, will fail in the mega-thrust earthquake because it's cost prohibitive to build it to withstand a 9.5 earthquake and that hasn't been discussed;

so why build it.

14. the existing bridges have not been retrofitted – their days are numbered even without an earthquake;

15. there's no evidence 'we the people' have been asked about funding...

16. Etc. UGB issue I pay both state & fed tax

I want to express my concerns about how my tax dollar is being wasted on a plan that is going no-where. If you must proceed, at least change your focus from a new bridge, to not only retrofitting the existing bridges but to funding the addition of a public transportation/walk/bike lane to the existing bridges.

Good morning. My name is Emily Loberg, and I am a resident of Ward 1.

Last Wednesday, I attended the 3rd Bridge funding workshop for the public. Through experimenting with the funding tool and discussing the options with my tablemates, it became clear to me that there is not a viable funding source for the bridge, nor is there a consensus on an optimal funding strategy. However, some of the funding options could be beneficial if used on far more urgent infrastructure projects.

A raise to the gas tax, for example, is long overdue. The money currently generated by the gas tax does not come near to providing for road infrastructure and maintenance costs, meaning that cost is not adequately tied to use. Instead of raising the gas tax to fund a project that makes drive-alone trips easier and more convenient, we should raise it to provide much needed funds for road maintenance and earthquake preparation.

Additionally, tolls on the current bridges could create incentives to decrease drive-alone trips and rely on other modes of transportation. If implemented during peak travel hours, tolls would encourage some travelers to adjust their schedules and reduce congestion on the bridges, thus solving the problem purported to be fixed by the new bridge while generating funds for more important projects, such as a seismic retrofit of the current bridges for the coming earthquake. Tolls could also make transit a more viable option for many who don't currently use it to cross the bridge, creating more riders and revenue for our bus system.

However, without running on weekends or having widely accessible routes, the bus system cannot be a reliable alternative for many people. Those who depend on the bus system for mobility or who cannot afford to drive are systematically ignored in our transportation system. Planning projects that expand auto capacity in conjunction with cuts to bus routes and hours will decrease ridership, increase reliance on cars, and continue to disenfranchise non-car users.

Finally, raising property taxes for the project would not tie the infrastructure's cost to its use, and thus would only exacerbate the road use problems and congestion that have led to the third bridge project.

Instead of increasing road capacity and encouraging more automotive travel, we should be looking at ways to tie road cost to its use, maintain the infrastructure we have, and create a more holistic transportation structure that encourages a variety of travel modes. Thank you for your time.