

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee

July 23, 2002
ODOT District 2C Office
Troutdale, Oregon

Members Attending:	Bill Pattison, Carolyn Wood, Charlie Sciscione, Wayne Stewart, Jack Wiles, Sally Donovan, Nancy Niedernhofer (phone).
Staff Present:	Jeanette Kloos.
Others Attending:	Sam Wilkins, Bill Barnhart, Brad DeHart and June Carlson, ODOT; Nancy Russell and Robert Hoffman, Friends of the Gorge; David Sell, Western Federal Lands Highway Division, Federal Highway Administration; John Fagan, Archeological Investigations NW, Inc.; Scott Franklin and Robert Hatfield, PacLand; Greg Hathaway, Davis Wright Tremaine; Warren Morgan and Christine Knowls, HRCRG.
<p>Bill Pattison, chair, called the meeting to order.</p> <p>Jeanette Kloos summarized the background information provided previously to the Committee members (attached). The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the mitigation proposed for the widening of the Historic Columbia River Highway (Cascade Avenue) in association with the relocation of Country Club Road proposed by Wal-Mart.</p> <p>Scott Franklin, PacLand, described the proposed mitigation, which includes a place to pull off the roadway and park. An interpretive sign and picnic tables are proposed. He noted that some had asked if this could be at a different location? He noted that this location is available and he did not know of other sites that are available to Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart does not have the ability to condemn property and can only buy from willing sellers. Changing the interpretive sign to a kiosk is something that can be discussed.</p> <p>Charlie Sciscione noted that the proposal has traffic issues that are being discussed in other venues, including access management requirements, turning radius concerns and conformance with the Transportation Systems Plan proposal for a future road to the east. At this time it is not certain that the relocated Country Club Road proposal will be the ultimate design.</p> <p>Scott Franklin agreed, but stated that mitigation will be needed in any case and discussion with the HCRH AC of mitigation is needed. He believes</p>	

that the relocated intersection can be made to work.

Bill Pattison asked what the time frame is for a location decision. Bill Barnhart said that discussions are on-going. Charlie Sciscione said that the Division 51 time line has not started. It begins when an application for a road approach is received, presumably from Hood River County. Then there are three consecutive time periods (30, 60 and 180 days) which can be extended if requested.

A public hearing is scheduled on August 27 with Hood River County for the development proposal.

Sally Donovan asked about the detention area. Scott Franklin said that he expects it to be in the location show, due to the grades and the need to detain the stormwater from the relocated Country Club Road.

Jack Wiles suggested that the mitigation be programmatic, such as a curriculum for the HCRH. Off site interpretation could include implementation of the Interpretive Plan for the Twin Tunnels Visitor Station.

Nancy Niedernhofer said that programmatic mitigation can be considered, but on site mitigation is also important.

Scott Franklin said that Wal-Mart would be in favor of an option that could include implementing the Interpretive Plan and restoring the site of the existing Country Club Road with more natural plantings.

Charlie Sciscione said that a workable plan is needed. The right-out on to the HCRH/Cascade Avenue will not meet spacing standards; access from the current Country Club Road location will need to be closed. Perhaps a pedestrian-only access to the area would be possible?

Wayne Stewart said that the continuity of the street trees, antique-style street lights and sidewalks is important. A sign that could be read by pedestrians would be desirable. He asked how long the improvement along the HCRH/Cascade Avenue would be? Scott Franklin said that it would be 8-900 feet, from essentially the existing Country Club Road to beyond the Texaco, about to the mobile home park. Both sides would be improved. Bill Barnhart asked if it would tie into the curb at the mobile home park. Scott Franklin said he would need to check the more detailed set of plans.

Carolyn Wood echoed Wayne Stewart's concern about consistency of the streetscape within the City. There may be foot and bike traffic to this site, but not car traffic. If so, the interpretation should be oriented to those

users. The area should be visually appealing. There may be more foot traffic than currently, from the Columbia Gorge Hotel to the Wal-Mart.

Scott Franklin noted that the Wal-Mart will be located about 1500 feet down Country Club Road from the HCRH/Cascade Avenue. Bill Barnhart noted that some people walk across I-84 every day, but the sidewalk on the bridge is narrow. Charlie Sciscione noted that the roadway is a "shared roadway" for bikes and motor vehicles.

Wayne Stewart asked if the streetscape treatment could be extended to the freeway. Bill Barnhart estimated that this would be about 30 feet. Scott Franklin said that this extension would be easy to include.

Scott Franklin noted that the area between the existing and proposed locations of Country Club Road has an existing landscape feature - a large rock outcropping. This would remain in any case.

Carolyn Wood asked how deep the detention pond would be; would it be a hazard? Scott Franklin said that the detention pond could be fenced.

Sally Donovan requested documentation of the current condition of the HCRH, to the Historic American Engineering Record standards, including photography.

Carolyn Wood suggested that signage should not be oriented to cars; do not want to have cars stopping on the HCRH/Cascade Avenue to try to read them. They should be pedestrian in scale. Jeanette Kloos suggested that continuing the interpretive sign design (porcelain enamel, arched top, exposed aggregate, five-sided post) be considered; if a kiosk was used, two or more signs could be mounted on it.

Scott Franklin said it would be possible to add a bike rack.

Sally Donovan said that she did not consider this a nice place to be, with the traffic noise. She did not want to see too much development here.

Wayne Stewart said that he believes that goal should be preserving the continuity of the roadway. This will become a fully urban setting in the future and continuity of the sidewalks, street trees, antique-style street lights and caps on street signs is important. Charlie Sciscione agreed, but said that all of this is already required. What should be mitigation for the HCRH impacts be? The abandoned roadway will need to be scarified in any case.

Jack Wiles said that the goal is not to modernize the HCRH. The urban streetscape is a reality and practicality. The goal is to keep the integrity of the alignment. As you change the width, you adversely affect the historic

district. Mitigation is needed beyond the required streetscape treatment.

Carolyn Wood said the site could include some interpretation. Money could be provided for an educational fund, since a pedestrian oriented site would cost less than a car-oriented site. Brad DeHart asked how would this difference be quantified? Perhaps this could work like a wetland bank.

Ownership of the property was discussed. Currently it is part ODOT and part Wal-Mart property. Who will maintain it in the future? ODOT does not have a landscape crew in this area. While OPRD maintains the recreational sites of the HCRH State Trail, Jack Wiles does not see that this area would fit as a State Park. The issue of future maintenance was recognized as a topic that would need to be determined by others at a future time. Charlie Sciscione suggested that the mitigation could include Wal-Mart responsibility for future maintenance.

Nancy Russell suggested that Ruthton Park, on the north side of I-84, was another possible location for mitigation. Also, Westcliff Drive is pretty bleak in the area between the Drive and I-84; perhaps this streetscape could be improved. Jeanette Kloos noted that no discussions have occurred to date to determine future streetscape on Westcliff Drive.

Nancy Niedernhofer described the mitigation that is occurring at another Wal-Mart location, including restoration of a historic trail, landscaping, signage and funding of long term maintenance of the landscaping and sign. She said it is difficult to come up with a particular dollar amount for mitigation of an affect.

Charlie Sciscione suggested that there be a fund for maintenance and a mitigation bank fund, which could be used for work on Westcliff Drive, an education curriculum or implementation of the Interpretive Plan.

Wayne Stewart proposed that mitigation include money going into a fund, plus the full streetscape all the way to the freeway bridge, limited bicycle and pedestrian oriented improvements, native relandscaping of the site, educational outreach and Wal-Mart maintenance of the site. The amount of the fund could be determined later. Sally Donovan reiterated her request for documentation to HABS/HAER standards. Jack Wiles suggested that the amount should be something similar to the cost of previous proposal.

Carolyn Wood made a motion to ask the developers to determine the value of the original proposal; bring back this figure to the HCRH AC for review. The funds would be used for future mitigation. This motion was seconded by Charlie Sciscione and received six affirmative votes, with

Sally Donovan abstaining.

Wayne Stewart made a motion that the full streetscape (Hood River Transportation System Plan standards) be extended to the freeway bridge, bicycle and pedestrian improvements be included and the "island" be relandscaped with native plants, maintained by Wal-Mart. Charlie Sciscione second this motion. The motion was amended to also include the HAER documentation. It received six affirmative votes with Sally Donovan abstaining.

June Carlson asked if the cost of the original proposal would be the starting point for negotiations or the end? Carolyn Wood said that it needed to be the starting point; the amount would need to be reasonable.

The meeting was then adjourned by Chair Bill Pattison.

Attachment

Background Information for July 23 HCRH AC Meeting