

# Beltline Facility Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee

## Meeting #4 Summary

DATE: Thursday, September 17, 2009, 5:30-7:30

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mary Archer, Lane Transit District  
Barb Bellamy, Eugene School District  
Connie Bloom Williams, Commuter Solutions/ point2point  
Michael Brewster, Emergency Services  
Heather Hannah, Active Bethel Neighbors  
Mike Hawley, Sherman Brothers Trucking  
Troy McAllister, MWMC (alternate for Chuck Gottfried)  
Tom Mitchell, Cal Young Neighborhood Association  
Eileen Nittler, River Road Community Association  
Ryan Pape, Eugene Chamber of Commerce  
Christian Pape, Eugene Chamber of Commerce (alternate)  
Paul Spain, River Avenue Business  
George Staples, Delta Sand and Gravel  
Sarah Strand, MPO CAC  
Gary Wildish, Santa Clara Community Association

MEMBERS ABSENT: Charles Biggs, Friends of Eugene  
Ed Moore, DLCD  
Shane Rhodes, Safe Routes to School

STAFF: Celia Barry, Lane County  
Savannah Crawford, ODOT  
Chris Henry, City of Eugene Public Works  
Kurt Yeiter, City of Eugene Planning  
Kristin Hull, CH2M HILL  
Terra Lingley, CH2M HILL  
Shaun Quayle, Kittelson and Associates  
Brian Ray, Kittelson and Associates

PUBLIC: None

LOCATION: Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC),  
410 River Avenue

The meeting started at 5:30, with 16 members in attendance, and no members of the public observing. The meeting started with a welcome and introductions by those present.

Each SAC member present received a packet of relevant materials for their 3-ring binder.

The packet contains:

- Tonight's agenda
- SAC Meeting #3 summary
- Open house summary
- Meeting memo describing how the concept families will be used going forward

Kristin introduced the agenda for the meeting and went through the SAC Meeting #3 summary and asked for feedback and if all members thought that the summary was accurate.

Tom Mitchell provided a clarification of the information he presented that was summarized on the last page of the meeting notes. He provided a replacement paragraph to insert into the summary.

Kristin also noted that Celia Barry from Lane County suggested that an additional member be added to the advisory committee, representing the Lane County Road Advisory Committee. No member present objected to adding a member to the committee.

## **Public Comment**

There were no members of the public in attendance, and no public comment.

## **Comments on the Open House Summary**

Terra summarized what some of the comments were at the open house. Kristin noted that many of the attendees who were concerned about adding a bridge at Valley River Center were happy to hear that it was not being contemplated by our plan because it is outside of our project study area. There was a lot of support for an arterial bridge adjacent to the existing bridge, or possibly a bridge farther north in Eugene.

Tom had a comment from the Open House: he was surprised to find that officials attending the open house were unaware of the proposed developments at RiverRidge Golf Course and the Goodpasture Island. Savannah clarified that ODOT is aware of the developments, and that some officials at the open house from Salem may have been less familiar with potential Eugene developments. She was confident that traffic impacts analysis would be required for approval of both developments and would stay engaged as those processes move forward. Brian also noted that land use designations were included in the traffic model, but zoning changes were not included until adopted by the City.

## **Concept Families (Brian Ray, Kittelson and Associates)**

Kristin started this section by clarifying that the families of concepts being shown are very high level, to give an idea of the tradeoffs. The figures shown are preliminary, planning level and not meant to be used to count individual impacts, but to simply provide an idea of the improvement and how it would impact the area.

Brian then started with a reminder of the range of problems on the Beltline Highway: closely spaced interchanges, ramp geometry, friction and merging. He then reminded committee members of the palette of improvements available to roadway engineers, the ramp braids, the collector-distributor road, and the ramp removal families, and how these

would address the previously identified problems on the highway. He then showed a general footprint overlaid on an aerial photograph of the Beltline, starting with the concept family that impacted the neighborhood the most.

### **Ramp Braid**

This concept family impacts the most amount of land adjacent to the highway. Due to the need for ramps to enter and leave the highway and have enough room to “take off” to rise above other ramps or drop below raised ramps, a lot of room is needed south of Beltline between River Road and the River Avenue/Division Avenue interchange.

The River Avenue/Division Avenue interchange would need a lot of room, especially near Delta Sand and Gravel north of the highway.

River Road would need to be improved, because it is already near capacity. Some families could increase traffic at the interchange, and an upgrade the highway without addressing the congestion on the local roadway at River Road would not improve capacity in the system. All concepts show the need to widen and improve River Road both north and south of the highway.

Ryan asked if the highway improvements could be done first, and Brian said that the River Road improvements could happen at the same time or before upgrades to the highway, but it wouldn't make sense to upgrade the highway before River Road is improved.

Gary asked if the ramp braid concept family reduces the volume of traffic on the existing Willamette River bridges, as the ramps from River Avenue/Division Avenue would be separate across the river, merging and diverging from the mainline east of the river. Brian said that it would improve traffic movement along the Beltline Highway due to the longer ramps and better merge/diverge areas, and those people would be on the ramps over the river.

Paul asked about what happens to the current access underneath the bridge for trucks at River Avenue/Division Avenue, since the figure showed adding an overpass for the interchange traffic. Paul was wondering if the over crossing was more economical. Brian explained that current design principles suggest that an over crossing is a better way to move traffic at that interchange.

Paul then asked how the access to the Willamette River would be affected. Brian responded that we are not at the level of detail that would consider access to the river at this point. When we get to actual recommendations for projects, that issue would be addressed.

### **Evaluation of Ramp Braid family**

Kristin relayed how the Project Management Team (PMT) evaluated the ramp braid concept family with respect to the evaluation criteria that this group approved at the last meeting.

- The ramp braid concept family improves mobility/reliability and connectivity within the project study area.
- Braids improve safety
- There are large impacts to businesses and residences, but it improves economic viability by improving freight mobility.

- Has high environmental impacts due to the amount of development in the wetlands and floodplain
- This concept family is the most expensive to build and maintain, mostly because of the number of structures needed, it is also hard to phase, most would need to be built at the same time.

### **Collector/Distributor (C/D)**

This concept family preserves the mainline flow of traffic by removing the merge/diverge friction to a separate road adjacent to the highway. This road would not have any driveways or local access, would simply collect traffic entering the highway and distribute traffic exiting the highway. For the Delta Highway interchange, there is a possibility to mix and match concepts with other mainline concepts.

The C/D has a narrower footprint than the braided ramp concept family.

Sarah asked if the ramps would be over or under at Delta Highway, and Brian responded that it would be the same as today.

### **Evaluation of Collector/Distributor family**

- Improves mobility/reliability and connectivity within the project study area
- This concept family has fewer community livability/residential impacts than the braid, and economic viability is impacted, but impacted less than the ramp braid
- Safety is better than current conditions, but the merging/weaving is not eliminated, just moved to the C/D road where speeds are slower and weaving is expected
- The C/D concept family has similar environmental impacts to the braid option, because there is still construction in wetlands and floodplain
- The cost is expensive, and phasing would not be possible.

Paul asked if the traffic from Delta Highway westbound would have an opportunity to merge onto the mainline. Brian showed how traffic would be able to merge on to the mainline from the C/D road near the River Avenue/Division Avenue interchange.

### **Remove Ramps**

This concept family has the fewest impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses, though there are still the common impacts from the necessary River Road improvements. Brian explained that the River Road improvements could be even more important if the River Avenue/Division Avenue ramps were closed because closing those ramps could increase pressure on River Road. He also explained that the River Avenue/Division Avenue connection under the Beltline Highway would be maintained.

### **Evaluation of Remove Ramps family**

- Removing the ramps would improve mobility/reliability by providing more space between interchanges and reducing traffic friction
- This concept family has fewer community livability/residential impacts than the ramp braid and C/D family, but impacts the River Road area businesses which would be affected by reduced access to Beltline Highway

- Safety is better than current conditions because of the increased space between interchanges
- The remove ramps family concept has fewer environmental impacts to the braid and C/D family, and requires less construction within the floodplain.
- The cost is less expensive than both the braid and C/D concepts

## Discussion

Kristin then shared with the group some of the PMT's thoughts on the families of concepts and asked for the committee's feedback on what was set aside, and what was recommended to move forward. She told the group that the PMT recommended setting aside the braided ramp family because the impacts were the greatest and that those kinds of solutions may actually provide more capacity than is needed. Celia noted that this concept family is reminiscent of a solution that would happen in the 1960's by throwing improvements at the problem and that it was overbuilding for the need.

George from Delta Sand and Gravel asked if it would be possible to get handouts or sit down with ODOT and talk through the concepts with his engineers. Kristin said that the project team would be happy to talk through these concepts with his group, along with the River Avenue business association if they are interested.

Tom asked what the bridge rating on the existing bridges was. Kristin answered that the bridges are in good shape, and are not structurally deficient, however, if any alternative requires expansion of the bridges or modification, they would need to be rebuilt instead of widened.

Ryan asked if there were issues with the concepts presented tonight if we are still 10 years out from construction, which of these concepts would work best 20 years from now given the construction timeline?

Kristin then asked if there were any deal breakers on any of the concepts presented tonight, or there were any concepts that committee members absolutely would not like to see again.

Paul said that maintaining access at River Avenue was critical. The businesses in the area and the City of Eugene improved River Avenue with the expectation that River Avenue would still have access to Beltline Highway, and he said that there would be a lot of objection to closing the on-ramp.

Kristin noted that concepts which keep the River Avenue on-ramp open have business impacts south of Beltline and north of River Avenue. She asked how he felt about the tradeoffs between keeping the on-ramp open (which would displace businesses), and closing it (which would displace fewer businesses, but impact access). Paul said he was aware of the tradeoffs and he expects that landowners adjacent to the highway would anticipate impacts to their businesses for the concepts, and that they would prefer to keep the on-ramp.

Kristin then asked the group if they agreed with Paul that keeping the on-ramp at River Avenue was really important. Three to four committee members noted their support.

Chris mentioned that additional local crossings north of Beltline Highway will be tested in the traffic modeling.

The SAC agree with the PMT to take out the braided ramp options as a recommendation, and suggested that a River Avenue on-ramp needed to be maintained (in some version).

## **Delta Interchange Concept Families**

Brian noted that due to the proximity of the Goodpasture Island Road interchange to the Delta Highway/Beltline Highway interchange, it would also be affected by any project.

The first concept family was a system service (Flyover) concept that would look very similar to the I-5 flyover. The PMT opted to set this aside as it is more structure, more impacts than the area warrants, and would provide more solution than what is needed.

The second concept family was a partial cloverleaf. Goodpasture Island Road would be 5 lanes over Delta Highway, and would modify the curve of the existing exit.

From Goodpasture Island Road north, the roadway would transition into an arterial – there would be some sort of traffic control (light or roundabout) at the southern ramp terminal – slowing northbound traffic.

Ryan asked if a signal at the eastbound Beltline Highway off-ramp terminal would back up traffic onto the Beltline Highway, and Brian responded that the backup issue is one that would be studied and avoided by the signal type or timing.

Paul asked why the southwest ramp would be eliminated from eastbound Beltline to southbound Delta and routed through a traffic signal or roundabout. Brian explained that this design eliminates weaving.

## **Next Steps**

The next Steering Committee Meeting is on October 5<sup>th</sup> – Committee members are welcome to attend. They will be reviewing the PMT and SAC's recommendations.

The PMT will work on refining the concepts and evaluating alternatives for further study.

## **Next Meeting, Close and Next Steps**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm, and the next meeting will be held in November. Members will be notified of the meeting date as soon as possible.