

Beltline Facility Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Meeting #5 Summary

DATE: Wednesday, December 2, 2009, 5:30-7:30

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Biggs, Friends of Eugene
Connie Bloom Williams, point2point
Chuck Gottfried, MWMC
Heather Hannah, Active Bethel Neighbors
Tom Mitchell, Cal Young Neighborhood Association
Eileen Nittler, River Road Community Association
Ryan Pape, Eugene Chamber of Commerce
Shane Rhodes, Safe Routes to School
Paul Spain, River Avenue Business
George Staples, Delta Sand and Gravel
Sarah Strand, MPO CAC
Gary Wildish, Santa Clara Community Association

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mary Archer, Lane Transit District
Barb Bellamy, Eugene School District
Michael Brewster, Emergency Services
Mike Hawley, Sherman Brothers Trucking
Jody Ogle, Roads Advisory Committee
Ed Moore, DLCD

STAFF: Mark Bernard, 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: Greg Austin, Clay's Refrigeration
Clayton Austin, Austin Management, LLC
Gordon B. Howard, Gor-Con Investments

LOCATION: Lyle Conference Room, 4th Floor, Wells Fargo Building
99 E Broadway

The meeting started at 5:30 with 12 members in attendance, and three 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 the 3-ring binder.

The packet contains:

- Tonight's agenda
- SAC Meeting #4 summary

Kristin introduced the meeting agenda, and asked for comments on the SAC Meeting #4 summary. There were no comments, but, in response to a question, Terra answered that Jody Ogle was the representative of the Roads Advisory Committee who had been appointed to the SAC.

Public Comment

No members of the public in attendance had any public comment at the beginning of meeting.

Share Range of Concepts (Brian Ray, Kittelson and Associates)

Kristin opened this section of the meeting by reminding the committee that the purpose of the facility plan is to examine a wide range of concepts/solutions, and to narrow the range of feasible solutions. Additionally, this process will document why concepts work and why they do not. She then described the evaluation process and reminded the group that we would evaluate and narrow the concepts. Kristin reviewed a continuum of potential solutions and explained that the project team has developed a range of concepts including from lower cost/smaller footprint options to higher cost/larger footprint options.

One of the concepts being studied is Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation System Management (TSM). TSM solutions could include ramp metering, system improvements/optimization options. Kristin explained that, though there are not illustrations of these concepts, the team will consider TDM/TSM strategies alongside the build concepts.

Charles asked if there was any money to build the project. Savannah answered that there was no funding identified for construction, only for planning and a portion of NEPA. However, ODOT recently received \$2 million from HB 2001 for Intelligent Transportation Solutions (ITS) on the Beltline Highway.

Brian then walked through the range of concepts that were developed after the last meeting in response to the comments received. Brian shared eight concepts:

Low-build concept 1 (shown in red on the maps)-extend eastbound Beltline to southbound Delta ramp

- Charles asked if it would be a physical separation. Brian answered that it will be a new lane, but not physically separated from the Beltline mainline.

Low-build concept 2 (shown in blue on the maps)- Low build concept 1 plus an extension of the westbound on-ramp to Beltline from Delta and a possible closure of the River Avenue on-ramp at peak periods.

- George noted that this could impact the sand and gravel company, and Brian suggested this option might be appropriate if Delta Sand and Gravel could schedule trucks to avoid the peak hours.

- Charles asked about where the TDM/TSM measures would go in these figures? Brian answered that the TDM/TSM measures are hard to show, and could go with these improvements, or without them.
- Connie suggested that a TDM strategy could be Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) – with possibly a dedicated right-of-way. This could affect the infrastructure, and it should be considered in these concepts. Since these are high level concepts, that is definitely a consideration, but not yet ready to be shown on the figures.

Low-build concept 3 (shown in green on the maps)-Low build concept 2 plus a new auxiliary lane in each direction across the Willamette River; Delta/Beltline cloverleaf modifications

- Charles asked a question about phasing – could the low impact projects happen first, and do they depend on each other? Brian answered that the pieces could work on their own, but sometimes might be needed in conjunction with other improvements.
- Charles asked how adding a lane would reduce the friction between on and off ramps. Brian answered that everyone who comes from River Ave to Delta southbound would not have to merge and can stay in their own lane in the new lane, which reduces the number of lane changing and merges.
- Ryan asked how these improvements impact safety. Brian answered that adding a third lane would allow traffic to get by an accident or let emergency vehicles/ambulances move more easily.
- Paul suggested widening Beaver Street and Division Avenue near Delta Sand and Gravel.
- Committee members raised concerns about intersection treatment at Beltline westbound to Delta Southbound ramp and potential queuing that could occur. Brian explained that he will model these movements, but it may be a tradeoff between queuing on the highway vs. queuing on the ramp.

Improved Existing – bring to contemporary form and function

- One comment from a committee member is that it looks expensive.
- Gary clarified that the auxiliary lane would not be physically separated from the existing lanes.
- Heather commented that this option clearly impacts River Ave/Division Ave commercial areas, and asked if the auxiliary lane on the north side of the highway would impact the residential area, Brian explained that the intent is to design the lane to avoid those impacts, but that it would require a design exception from ODOT.
- Gary asked if the industrial land on the south side of the Beltline would be impacted. Brian answered yes, if it is built to standard, but he and ODOT are looking at skinny ways to build the improvements to minimize impacts.
- Brian noted that there was one benefit from this option: Currently, the Santa Clara neighborhood can't get on Beltline directly. With this option, traffic could get on River Ave/Division Ave directly, which could lessen congestion on the River Road intersection.

- Connie asked if the additional Santa Clara traffic getting on the River Avenue/Division Avenue would make the intersection operate worse. Brian answered that we are not at that level of detail right now, but if this concept is carried forward, those affects would be studied.

Local arterial – to keep local cross-river trips on an arterial

- Kurt noted that there was an access “spur” to Delta Sand and Gravel for access, which is different than the previous concepts, which have kept existing access to Delta S & G.
- Charles asked if the red lines on the map went right over the bike/pedestrian system and new proposed trail. Brian answered yes. He suggested to also keep in mind that this spring will see improvements to the bike/pedestrian system, so some of the trails may have to be redone.

Split Diamond Concept – improve interchanges as Split Diamonds

- Charles asked if the local connection could be double decked or provided above the surface of the highway. Brian answered that it could technically be done, but it would be 5 or 10 times as expensive as the robust build concepts.
- Ryan asked about the Goodpasture intersection with Delta Highway, and if it was possible to have a diamond on-ramp to westbound Goodpasture. Brian answered that having a diamond on-ramp was the previous configuration of the interchange, and the on ramp for Beltline to Southbound Delta was too close to the potential off ramp for westbound Goodpasture, and so the interchange was modified.
- Tom added that there was currently a project at Goodpasture that has been approved, and the interchange could be very different by the time the Beltline project would be built.

Auxiliary Lane- Add a merge/diverge lane to the mainline Beltline

- No discussion.

Collector-Distributor (C-D) Roadway – separate roadway for merge/diverge movements

- No discussion.

Ramp Braid- physically separate the on- and off-ramps

- Paul asked if it would restrict northbound Delta traffic to River Avenue, noting that there are septic trucks that access the MWMC facility on River Ave. With how the concept is currently illustrated, that movement would not be direct, however, this concept reduces congestion in other parts of the network, and could improve travel times overall.
- Committee members also raised concerns about access to the river and use by marine patrol. Kristin mentioned that we are not at that level of detail, but asked Brian if local connectivity could occur within these options.

Discussion

Kristin asked if the full range of improvements were demonstrated for those that wanted to see a variety of options.

- Sarah said that there was a good range, though we haven't mentioned number of bridges for some of the concepts. Kristin noted that the concepts may add one new bridge, or an adjacent bridge, etc. Bridges are indeed addressed, and suggested that there is sensitivity for adding lanes across the river for many stakeholders. However, the bridge is a congestion pinch point.
- Shane noted that what we are addressing is the highway, not bike and pedestrian improvements. He suggested that this is all about vehicle and car movement, but does not address the bike pedestrian issues that already exist. Santa Clara residents could walk to the Delta shopping center, but can't because there aren't pedestrian route options. Kristin noted that the arterial connection option would have bike/pedestrian facilities. Chris Henry told the group that, if the highway bridges were rebuilt, there is a possibility of creating a separate bicycle and pedestrian path on the structure(s).
- Ryan asked what timeline we were building for. We talked about construction starting at the earliest in 12 years. How do you build the facilities? Do you build it to operate effectively for 5 years or 10 years after it's built? What do we use as a horizon? Kristin noted that we will evaluate traffic and the model in the evaluation, and generally build for 20 years in the future.
- Shane asked how much will this project take into account greenhouse gas emissions or peak oil. Brian answered that right now if no other additional vehicles are added, there would still be congestion on the Beltline. ODOT is currently developing a policy about how to address greenhouse gas emissions in transportation planning.
- Sarah noted that a huge part of the problem on Beltline is the River Ave/Division Ave on-ramps, and suggested that Beltline would be less congested they were closed. Brian explained that the interchange carries a lot of traffic, and if it was closed, River Road would become more congested.
- Heather noted that anything over the medium level of build alternatives is not practical and would be a political challenge. She prefers the low to medium build alternatives, and is a huge supporter of the local roadway from west to the east (local connector) and would really like the committee to push for that option. The local arterial option would make Beltline better by connecting the neighborhoods and taking traffic off of the Beltline. She also noted that she is opposed to a stoplight on Delta at the end of the ramp off the Beltline eastbound.
- Paul was concerned that some of the concepts (especially those that removed the underpass near the Division Ave/River Avenue interchange) would limit access to the river and could hinder Lane County Search and Rescue operations.
- Many committee members expressed skepticism about how the traffic light at the Beltline eastbound to Delta ramp would work.

- Ryan asked how the arterial will be funded, since it would not be an ODOT facility. Savannah answered that if it improves the function of a state facility, it could qualify for state and federal funding, but that the City or County would probably provide some funding.
- Connie asked if this would be a preservation or modernization project, which are two different types of ways projects are funded by the state. Savannah answered that it would probably be a modernization project, depending on the concepts that are carried forward.
- Charles noted that he was disheartened that TDM and TSM were relegated to an analytical exercise. He would like them to be treated as equally to the build concepts. Kristin noted that when it comes to evaluation, TDM/TSM would be rated with the other alternatives.
- Tom requested a map showing which jurisdiction owns study area roadways. Mark told Tom he could find this map on the Lane County GIS site.

Public Comment

Clay Austin asked what the impact the adjacent property when talking about the concepts presented tonight. Brian answered that the auxiliary lane concept would try to fit the third lane or make it narrow to reduce impact on adjacent properties. The project team will work with ODOT to attempt to keep the impacts low.

Next Steps

Kristin asked about meeting location. Recently, the project team has had difficulty finding an available room downtown. The committee was flexible and provided additional meeting locations but general consensus was downtown location first and meeting location elsewhere (possibly the Chamber or Kendall buildings).