



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Department of Transportation
Region 3 ~ Headquarters

Matt Malone
Project Leader

3500 NW Stewart Parkway
Roseburg, Oregon 97470
Telephone (541) 957-3503
FAX (541) 957-3685

July 8, 2004

XXX
XXX
XXX

File Code:

Dear XXX:

As you may be aware, the Oregon Department of Transportation is working with the City of Brookings on a project to address current and projected traffic congestion and safety issues along Highway 101 in downtown Brookings. The project is named Downtown Brookings - Highway 101 Transportation Solutions. I am ODOT's Project Leader for this effort.

We are currently in the process of completing an environmental assessment report for potential improvements to Hwy 101 in the downtown area. The environmental assessment will evaluate the potential impacts of two primary build alternatives. Alternative 4 is a one-way couplet design that would keep northbound traffic on Highway 101 and move southbound traffic to Mill Beach Road and Railroad Avenue. Alternative 5 is a non-couplet design that would add turn lanes and other intersection improvements to Highway 101 through downtown Brookings. The final environmental assessment report will be completed by January 2005 and will include a recommendation of which alternative (if any) should be implemented.

I am contacting you because our records indicate that you own or lease a property that could be directly impacted by one of our Alternatives. Since this is the case, I want to encourage you to attend the public meetings that ODOT will be holding in Brookings this September to discuss the findings of the draft environmental assessment report. These meetings will provide an opportunity to learn more about each of the two primary build alternatives and ask questions of our project team. The date and time of the meetings will be confirmed during the next few weeks and will be advertised in the *Curry Coastal Pilot*.

In the meantime, please call me at (541) 957-3503 if you have any questions or need more information about our project or the upcoming meetings.

Sincerely,

Matt Malone
Project Leader
ODOT – Region 3



(continued from other side)

An STA designation would allow the City to have more influence on the highway design. Design elements such as traffic speeds, traffic calming, and pedestrian improvements could be implemented to make a better fit for the community, rather than traditional highway standards.

In January 2004, the City of Brookings City Council voted to approve the STA designation. Final approval by ODOT is likely to happen this summer. Because the STA designation is not part of the Downtown Brookings - Highway 101 Transportation Solutions Project, the designation will likely occur regardless of the alternative identified as the Preferred Alternative.

The STA designation does influence the decision making for the project by allowing more traffic congestion in the downtown area and placing an emphasis on the Highway's role as a "Main Street."

Calendar of Important Dates

Late July

Stakeholder Committee Meeting-Discussion of EA findings prior to release.
Project Development Team (PDT)-Discussion of EA findings prior to release.

Mid August

EA issued for Public Review and beginning of 30-day comment period.

Early to Mid-September

Two-day public Involvement Event:
Day 1-Open House
Day 2-Q&A Panel and Public Hearing

For questions or comments regarding this project contact:

Matt Malone
ODOT Region 3
Roseburg, OR
541-957-3503

richard.malone@state.or.us



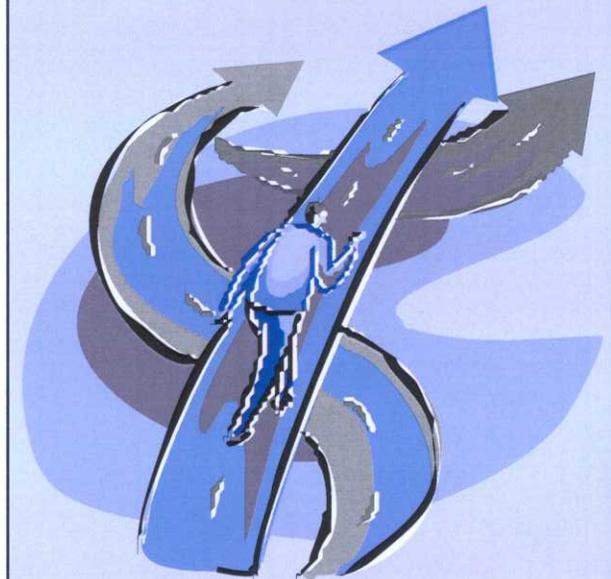
Oregon Department of Transportation

355 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97301-3871

BROOKINGS

Transportation Solutions Newsletter

Where We Are And Where We Are Headed



June 2004

PROJECT STATUS AND OVERVIEW

ODOT and consultant staff are currently preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed Downtown Brookings - Highway 101 Transportation Solutions Project. Two "build" alternatives (Alternatives 4 and 5) and a "No-Build" alternative will be studied in the EA. The "build" alternatives were identified through a lengthy process that included:

- Development of project Purpose and Need,
- Development of project Goals and Objectives,
- Development of Conceptual Alternatives,
- Development of project Evaluation Criteria, and
- Screening of Conceptual Alternatives against the Evaluation Criteria.

Alternatives 4 and 5 were identified by the Stakeholder Committee and Project Development Team as the "reasonable range" of alternatives for study in the EA. Remaining alternatives were dismissed from further analysis.

Alternative 4 is a couplet design that would divert southbound traffic entering Brookings on Highway 101 onto a three-lane highway along what is now Mill Beach Road and Railroad Street. The highway would have a bike lane and on-street parking. Northbound traffic coming across the Chetco River Bridge would remain on Chetco Avenue with three lanes, a bike lane, and would retain most of the current on-street parking.

Alternative 5 would keep all traffic on Chetco Avenue, but on-street parking would be removed to accommodate left turn pockets. These turning lanes would allow for safer turning movements for vehicles wishing to access side streets off of Chetco Avenue. Additional improvements to Railroad Street are included as part of Alternative 5, but

because they would not be part of the Oregon State Highway system, the funding for Railroad Street improvements would need to be through a separate funding agreement between ODOT and the City of Brookings.

More About the EA

The EA is planned for public release in August 2004, and will provide a detailed analysis that will aid in selection of a preferred alternative for the project. After the EA is released there will be a 30-day public comment period. In addition, all public and agency comments received will be reviewed and responded to by FHWA and ODOT.

Following the comment period, the Stakeholder Committee will review a summary of comments and public input, and be asked to recommend a preferred alternative for the project. Likewise, the Brookings City Council will also be asked for a preferred alternative recommendation. These recommendations will be given to the Project Development Team (PDT), who will identify the preferred alternative that will be carried into a more refined analysis called the Revised Environmental Assessment (REA). During the REA analysis, the design for the preferred alternative will undergo a more refined analysis and can be revised to reflect comments received during the 30-day comment period. Completion of the REA is expected by the end of the year.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES THIS SUMMER

Following issuance of the EA, the next 30 calendar days are open for public and agency comments on the document. ODOT will be holding two days of public meetings in September associated with the release of the EA. The meetings will occur two weeks after the release of the EA to give residents a chance to review the conclusions of the analysis. These meetings will give the citizens of Brookings

an opportunity to ask questions regarding the results of the analysis, provide comments regarding the findings of the EA analysis, and offer input related to the identification of the preferred alternative.

First Night-Open House

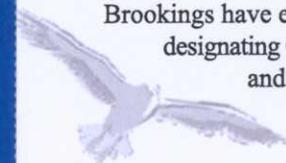
An Open House, similar to the public Open Houses held at the Chetco Public Library in 2003, will be held to provide summaries of the findings of the EA. This type of meeting forum favors one-on-one interactions between concerned citizens and project staff. No presentations will be made. Technical experts from ODOT will be on hand to explain potential impacts (both positive and negative) that could result from Alternative 4, Alternative 5, or the No Build alternative. Written comments can be submitted at this meeting, and a transcriber will be available to record public testimony.

Second Night-Q&A and Public Comment

ODOT will present a panel of experts who will respond to questions from citizens regarding the alternatives being considered and the potential impacts discussed in the EA. Following the Q&A period, ODOT will hear and record public testimony related to the analysis conducted in the EA, and take input regarding the selection of a preferred alternative. Written comments can be submitted at this meeting, and a transcriber will be available to record public testimony.

NEW DESIGNATION FOR CHETCO AVENUE IN BROOKINGS

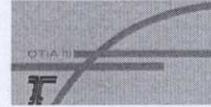
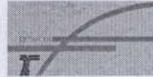
State highways in Oregon are often a town's "Main Street" and serve many needs within a community. This is the case with Highway 101/Chetco Avenue in Brookings. Accordingly, ODOT and the City of Brookings have evaluated the potential for designating Chetco Avenue, between Alder and Pacific Avenues, as a Special Transportation Area (STA).





BROOKINGS

Transportation Solutions Newsletter



December 2003



Transportation Planning for Downtown Brookings

So Many Reports and Ideas. What's Next?

For close to a decade various city panels and committees have developed concepts and plans for improvements to Highway 101 (Chetco Avenue) in the downtown Brookings area. These studies have included the South Coast Transportation Study in 1996, which recommended a one-way couplet on Chetco Avenue and Railroad Street, and the Downtown Master Plan (2001) that recommended four lanes on Chetco Avenue and improvements to Railroad Street.

In the Brookings area, Highway 101 serves as the main arterial for local transportation needs, is used to reach regional tourism/recreation destinations, and provides for regional freight movement. All of the functions served by Highway 101 make it a vital element to the economic viability of Oregon's south coast region.

The population of Brookings has grown steadily over the past ten years, as has the summer tourism traffic. With the increased use, Chetco Avenue has become increasingly congested in the downtown area. Delays along Chetco Avenue, particularly for those wishing to make left turns, have lengthened with the increased traffic. During the summer months, accommodating the large number of RVs that visit town has become a challenge. Railroad Street has also become an important local route for Brookings residents wishing to avoid the congestion on Chetco Avenue. All of these conditions point to a need to improve traffic mobility for those passing through Brookings and for local residents.

ODOT initiated the Downtown Brookings Transportation Solutions project in January 2003 with the purpose of improving operational and safety conditions on, and adjacent to, Chetco Avenue in downtown Brookings. At the start of the project, all of the previous studies and reports addressing Chetco Avenue redesigns were collected and reviewed. A series of stakeholder interviews with business owners and community leaders was used to gather additional information on the transportation challenges faced by Brookings residents and business owners. This background research provided ODOT with an historical perspective on transportation problems and issues that face the community of Brookings.

The primary purpose of this study is to resolve traffic and safety problems in the downtown Brookings area. For that reason, traffic and safety are the primary criteria used to judge the

adequacy of conceptual project alternatives.

Additional project criteria regarding local community goals, developed by the Stakeholder Committee and Project Development Team, will also be used to evaluate alternatives. Modernization projects are generally required to meet a 20-year design life.

Throughout 2003, six conceptual alternatives were developed and analyzed. Among these early alternatives were three couplet designs, two designs that keep all traffic on Chetco Avenue, and one downtown bypass. ODOT heard public input on those early concepts and conducted extensive traffic modeling to determine how they would function when future traffic

volumes were considered. Because three of the conceptual alternatives have difficulty meeting project objectives for traffic and safety, and other criteria, they are considered to be less viable, and have been recommended for elimination from further study.

All of the alternatives considered will be on display at an open house, **Monday, December 8, 2003, 5:00PM to 7:30PM, at the Chetco Community Public Library**. ODOT staff and consultants will be present at the open house to discuss project issues and to seek input from the local community prior to the beginning of the next level of analysis.

"All of the functions served by Highway 101 make it a vital element in enhancing the economic viability of Oregon's south coast region."

OPEN HOUSE

Public Open House Downtown Brookings

Highway 101 Transportation Solutions Project
Hosted by the Oregon Department of Transportation

Date: December 8, 2003

Time: 5:00-7:30 p.m.

Place: Chetco Community Public Library
405 Alder Street, Brookings

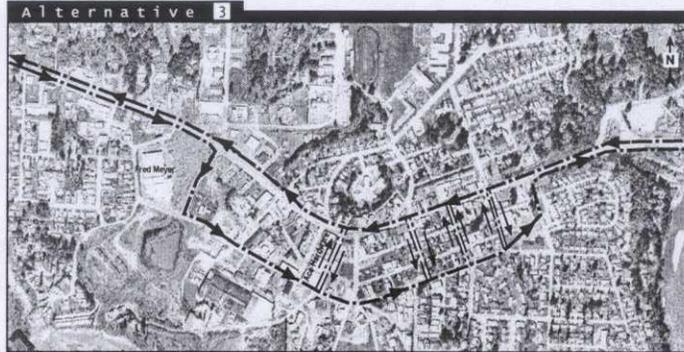
The Oregon Department of Transportation is hosting an open house to discuss future improvements to Highway 101 in downtown Brookings. Over the past six months, six conceptual alternatives have been evaluated as possible improvements for Highway 101. Based on the inability of some alternatives to solve traffic congestion and safety problems, a recommendation has been made to eliminate three alternatives from further study. Three alternatives remain: one alternative that would maintain two-way traffic on Chetco, and two couplet designs. The local community is encouraged to attend the open house to review the alternative development process and to discuss your issues and concerns with project staff prior to final narrowing of alternatives. This will be the last opportunity for public comment on the remaining alternatives before identifying the most viable alternatives to be advanced to the next stage of analysis.

ODOT attempts to hold all public meetings in accessible buildings. Accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities. Alternate formats are available upon request. If a sign language interpreter is needed, please call 48 hours prior to the meeting.

For more information about the project or the open house meeting, contact ODOT Project Leader Matt Malone at (541) 957-3503.

The Process we are Following

Six conceptual alternatives have been developed as part of the Downtown Brookings Transportation Solutions project. In October 2003, the Stakeholder Committee recommended three alternatives for elimination based on their inability to resolve traffic problems, as well as conflicts with other project goals such as minimization of displacements and project costs.



Alternative 3:

Design: One-Way Couplet using Chetco Avenue and Railroad Street. Couplet starts at 5th and Chetco Avenue.

Traffic Mobility: As currently designed, fails to meet mobility standard at 5th and Chetco Avenue.

Cost: ~\$8.4-9.6 million + 5th and Chetco Avenue Improvement cost



Alternative 4:

Design: One-Way Couplet using Chetco Avenue and Railroad Street. Couplet behind Fred Meyer using Mill Beach Boulevard and continuing on Railroad Street.

Traffic mobility: When designed with three northbound lanes all intersections meet mobility standards.

Cost: ~\$8.7-11.1 million



Alternative 5:

Design: Five lanes on Chetco Avenue with a center turn lane pockets, improvements to Railroad Street, Willow Street and Fern Street converted to one-way streets. Parking eliminated in downtown.

Traffic Mobility: As currently designed, intersections along Chetco Avenue at 5th Street and at Center Street fail to meet mobility standards.

Cost: ~\$2.2 million + 5th and Chetco Avenue Improvement cost

Local Coordination and Public Input

The ODOT process for developing potential alternatives for the Downtown Brookings Transportation Solutions project follows guidelines and regulations for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires substantial coordination with local governments and citizens to ensure adequate understanding of the issues and concerns of the community.

To ensure local involvement, ODOT formed a Stakeholders Committee composed of community members and business owners to act as an advisory panel for alternative development and selection. At the same time, a Project Development Team (PDT) was created. The PDT is comprised of ODOT technical and planning staff, as well as City of Brookings officials. The PDT responds to the recommendations from the Stakeholders Committee and is responsible for project decisions.

Over the past year these two groups have developed six conceptual alternatives. Several

ideas for the initial alternatives came from concepts developed during previous studies and from the Downtown Master Plan. Other concepts had not been previously evaluated. Several alternatives utilized the one-way couplet concept while other alternatives focused improvements on Chetco Avenue.

Another requirement of the NEPA process is providing opportunity for public input. This has been addressed, to date, with two Open Houses held in March and June of 2003. Comments were collected and recorded from those that attended to be considered in the alternative development process.

The NEPA process also encourages the development of criteria to evaluate all potential alternatives. Early in the process, future traffic mobility and safety were defined by ODOT as the most important criteria of the project. The Stakeholders Committee and PDT agreed that in order for an alternative to be carried forward and evaluated by additional criteria, an alternative must first be able to show that it would meet traffic mobility standards required by ODOT.

In addition to traffic mobility the Stakeholders Committee worked with ODOT staff to create additional evaluation criteria with which to assess the alternatives. The purpose of the evaluation criteria is to measure

“These alternatives were refined and re-evaluated by the Stakeholders Committee to determine their ability to meet the traffic and safety needs of downtown Brookings in the year 2027”

the alternatives' ability to meet Brookings' present and future downtown transportation needs such as easy pedestrian access, efficient movement of emergency vehicles, providing opportunity for parking, enabling the placement of public art works, and meeting the concepts in the Downtown Master Plan. Once these criteria were developed, they were taken before the PDT and approved.

Alternatives Considered for Elimination

Alternative 1

- Five lanes on Chetco Avenue with no parking
- Chetco Avenue more hospitable to automobiles and less friendly to pedestrians
- Intersections at 5th and Chetco and Center and Chetco failed to meet mobility standards
- Loss of parking a big concern for businesses

Alternative 2a, 2b, 2

- Short Couplet using Spruce Street (2b), Hemlock Street (2a), or Railroad Street (2)
- Use of existing streets near downtown to lessen couplet separation
- Significant property acquisitions would be required
- Least favorite alternative of Stakeholder Committee
- Intersection at 5th and Chetco failed to meet mobility standards

Alternative 6

- Move Highway 101 to Railroad Street and create bypass of downtown
- Turn Chetco Avenue into “Downtown Business District”
- Highway 101 traffic diverted at Mill Beach
- Boulevard rejoining Highway 101 near Alder Street
- Significant property acquisitions would be required
- Most expensive alternative
- Chetco Avenue the 5th and Chetco failed mobility standard even as a local street