MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date:	January 9, 2008
Purpose:	Fern Valley Interchange Project Citizen Advisory Committee, Project Development Team Meeting
Distribution:	CAC Members, Project Development Team, FV IAMP CAC Members, Public
From:	Sue Casavan, RVCOG
Date Prepared:	January 2008
CAC Attendees:	Bob Korfhage, Joan Haukom, Dack Doggett, Lenny Neimark, Tani Wouters, David Lewin, David Lowry, Terry Helfrich, Pauly Hinesly
FV IAMP CAC Attendees:	Lisa Sandrock, Mark Kellenbeck
Project Team Attendees:	Dick Leever, ODOT Project Manager Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager Gary Leaming, ODOT Project information Brian Sheadel, ODOT Senior Designer Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT Peter Schuytema, ODOT Nancy Reynolds, URS Project Manager Kate Lyman, URS Pat Foley, RVCOG Sue Casavan, RVCOG
Other Attendees:	6 members of the public signed in (sign-in sheet in file)
PDT Attendees:	Jerry Marmon, Brian Sheadel, Christina Fera-Thomas, Peter Schuytema, ODOT; Bruce Sophie and Bob Lewis, Phoenix; Vicki Guarino, RVMPO; Nick Fortey, FHWA

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1. Introductions, Review Agenda, Approve Minutes

Pat Foley, RVCOG Facilitator

Pat Foley began the meeting at 6:37 and informed members that this was the nineteenth meeting of the Fern Valley CAC and PDT committees. She said the last meeting for this group was held on March 7, 2007. Since that meeting the Fern Valley Interchange IAMP CAC and PDT have held two meetings, October 3 and November 7. She said the purpose of this meeting is to review the draft Environmental Impact Analysis results. She reviewed the agenda and added that this was a working committee meeting and members of the public were asked to make their comments during the public comment period allotted on the agenda. She asked if there were any changes or corrections to the March 2007 meeting minutes.

On a motion by David Lewin and seconded by Joan Haukom the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

2. Project Update

Dick Leever, ODOT

Dick L. said the committees will review the Draft Environmental Summary and the Environmental Assessment Final Traffic Review tonight. He said the traffic analysis was completed for the Environmental Assessment (EA). He added that technical teams were still working on reports. He presented a tentative schedule.

- Draft EA will be ready in April or May
- Public comment period will follow in May or June
- Identify the preferred alternative in June or July
- Revised EA should be completed within a 3 month period - October
- FHWA approval follows / Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) issued
- Design stage

He said the Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP) was going on concurrently. Technical Memorandums 1, 2, and 3 have been completed and traffic analysis (Tech Memo 4) for the IAMP regarding the development scenario should be ready in March.

Dick L. asked members if traffic operations on Fern Valley had improved. Lisa S. said that it had improved and the signal lighting seemed to be adjusted where the waits were not nearly as long as they were. She thought the trucks would always be an issue.

Joan H. said from her experience it had been pretty congested coming from Hwy 99 and crossing over to the east side between 5:30-6:00 p.m. Dick L. said if there were any changes or problems to please call the ODOT office and they will try to address it.

Terry H. appreciated ODOT addressing the problem when members brought it up at the last meeting. He said it seems to have helped a lot.

Bob L. commented that there was definitely an improvement of what they had before.

Bob K. said that when bicycling from the east to the west the lights do not activate. He wondered if there were sensors out there, the lights don't change and it is not a safe situation. Dick L. replied that he would ask the traffic people that question.

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3. Environmental Overview

Nancy Reynolds, URS

Nancy R. gave a Power Point presentation of the Environmental Summary. She said these were a lot of draft documents in various stages going through numerous review processes.

- Information is based on draft reports prepared by independent environmental technical experts.
- Analyses based on existing setting and year 2030 assumptions.
- Minor changes can be anticipated as alternatives are refined.

AIR QUALITY

Impacts same with build alternatives

- No long-term degradation of air quality anticipated.
- No intersections expected to exceed air quality standards for life of project.
- Construction would generate dust and other pollutants from heavy machinery.
- Measures would be included in project specifications to minimize construction impacts to air quality.
- Standard air quality analysis for transportation projects focuses on regional air quality and intersection impacts directly resulting from alternatives being considered.
- Analysis does not normally address concerns raised by Phoenix Hills neighborhood regarding diesel truck exhaust.
- This concern has been raised to the ODOT air quality expert, and her response will be reported to PDT and CAC.

Terry H. asked when air quality is discussed were they talking about if an intersection was close to residents versus commercial as he recalled hearing comments from Phoenix Hills residents about impacts to the air quality.

Nancy R. said that this analysis did not include those specifics but they have raised the issue.

Jerry M. explained that there is a standard set of parameters that have federal guidelines which they have to use. They have to follow the parameters and cannot exceed on the project and that is how the analysis is done on a region-wide, project-wide basis. He added that the analysis shows that with each alternative the parameters have not been exceeded at any of the intersections. He said the issue brought up by the east side neighborhood was truck exhaust and was a little different than the dust type factor at Phoenix Hills. He said the level stays the same for proximity to residents or commercial that we can't exceed and with respect to diesel emissions those fall into a different class of pollutants and at this point there is no quantitative methodology to assess those pollutants. He added that what will be in the technical reports is a qualitative discussion of the health risks associated with those emissions and there may be some general differences between the two alternatives which one may result in lesser emissions.

David Lewin asked if air quality analysis considered PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$. Nancy R. said there may be methods that can be discussed to address those issues. Jerry M. added that there may be some general inferences we could make just looking at the alternatives, one without stopping just intuitively could say there would be less emissions.

Lisa S. mentioned the truck industry looking into IdleAire solution which would help curb truck idling at truck stops.

Jerry M. explained that if emissions control policies at the federal level are looked at in the future, the toxicity levels particularly with respect to diesel are going down.

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Terry H. asked about the dust from tires and if it fell into this category. He felt daily vehicle traffic should be addressed. Jerry M. replied that when looking at the air quality report, tire and dust particles are small and would fall under the PM_{10} parameter.
Tani W. said she thought the Phoenix Hills concern was in correlation to the freeway and that Bear Creek Estates had mentioned it also.
Jerry M. added that they had to be careful to discriminate between the analysis that is a direct result from the alternative and an existing condition. David Lewin commented that the east side folks were also concerned about the change made to the ramps three or four years ago when truck traffic was rerouted on South Phoenix Road. He said when it came to existing conditions he thought the east side folks would ask what the baseline was, as it is today or before changes were made.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Impacts same with build alternatives

- No archaeological sites identified.
- Standard measures taken if sites discovered during construction.

BIOLOGY

Impacts similar with build alternatives

- Coho salmon (Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast) listed as Threatened under Endangered Species Act.
- Short-term construction impacts to creeks: removal of riparian vegetation, sediment in creeks.
- Long-term beneficial impacts to Bear Creek due to longer structure spanning creek.
- Slightly greater impacts with the Fern Valley Thru Alternative because of the additional crossing of Payne Creek.
- No Threatened or Endangered wildlife, suitable habitats, or plants anticipated in project area.

GEOLOGY

Impacts same with build alternatives

- Geology focuses on potential geologic hazards: seismic, slope stability (landslides), soil erosion.
- Seismic concerns (faults) low within project area.
- Bear Creek Bridge and overpass would be constructed to current seismic standards.
- Measures to ensure slope stability and minimize erosion would be included in project.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Impacts similar with build alternatives

- 25 Sites of Concern identified as having potential for hazmat.
- Key concerns in project area: Potential underground fuel tanks, heating oil tanks, asbestos in construction materials, herbicides and pesticides in soil.
- Additional subsurface testing will be conducted once the preferred alternative is chosen.

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HISTORIC RESOURCES

Impacts same with build alternatives

- 2 sites determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:
  - Medford Canal
  - Arrowhead Ranch (Coleman Ranch)
  - No direct impacts to historic resources.

LAND USE AND PLANNING

Direct Impacts

Impacts different with build alternatives

- Changing land from existing or planned use to highway use:
  - Fern Valley Thru—more impacts to EFU land.
  - N. Phoenix Thru—more impacts to commercial land.

Indirect Impacts

Definition and Types

Impacts caused by the project, but occurring later in time or farther removed in distance

Examples:

- Impacts on the rate and patterns of land development from change in access.
- Impacts on existing businesses and planned development resulting from highway traffic.

Indirect Impacts

Impacts similar with build alternatives

- Pressure to increase the rate of development.
- Pressure to fund additional transportation improvements to handle increased development (e.g., South Stage Road Overcrossing, access to and within developments).
- Pressure to redevelop residential and commercial properties west of I-5 (especially along OR 99, Fern Valley Road, and E. Bolz Road).

Indirect Impacts

Impacts different with build alternatives

- Design of future developments to accommodate alternative (e.g., site design of orchard in NE quadrant).
- N. Phoenix Thru Alternative would accommodate higher levels of future development (due to greater ability to handle traffic volumes).
- Pressure to redevelop residential and commercial properties east of I-5 (primarily along Fern Valley Road).

Consistency with State, Regional and Local Plans

Impacts same with build alternatives

- Jackson County:
  - TSP amendment to include project.
- City of Phoenix:
  - Comprehensive plan amendment to redesignate land zoned for interchange business to roadway.
  - Amendment to reclassify E. Bolz Road to higher function.
  - Site plan review for development.

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David Lewin asked if the comp plan amendment process (public hearings, comment, etc) for the Fern Valley project and Regional Problem Solving (RPS) could be combined.
Jerry M. replied that the RPS could take a long time and Nancy R. added that the comp plan and all planning actions had to be done before the final Environmental Assessment (EA).

Consistency with State, Regional and Local Plans

Impacts different with build alternatives

- Jackson County:
  - Goal exception requirements—discussed below.
  - Fern Valley Thru Alternative: Possible need to reclassify Fern Valley Road east of UGB as arterial.

Goal Exception Requirements Impacts different with build alternatives

- Oregon Land Use Law:
  - Transportation Planning Rule (TPR) implements statewide planning Goal 12 (Transportation).
  - TPR identifies transportation facilities, services and improvements permitted on rural lands.
  - TPR requires road realignments on EFU land to limit or otherwise minimize impacts on farmland (as designated under Goal 3—Agricultural Lands goal).

Goal Exception Requirements

EFU Zoning and Impacts

- Fern Valley Thru Alternative:
  - 7.4 acres north of UGB for realignment of N. Phoenix Road.
  - 1.3 acres east of UGB for extension of Fern Valley Road.
  - Total EFU required: **8.7 acres**
- N. Phoenix Thru Alternative:
  - 7.4 acres north of UGB for realignment of N. Phoenix Road.
  - Total EFU required: **7.4 acres**

Goal Exception Requirements

- The Fern Valley Thru Alternative would require a goal exception because of having a greater impact on EFU land.
  - Both alternatives would have same impact north of UGB.
  - Fern Valley Thru would have additional impacts east of UGB.
- The N. Phoenix Thru Alternative would not require a goal exception.

Goal Exception Requirements

- Two ways goal exception could be avoided for Fern Valley Thru Alternative:
  1. Expand Phoenix UGB to include the portion of Fern Valley Road that is realigned.
  - UGB expansion would need to be justified.
  - Regional Problem Solving (RPS) has identified this as a PH-10 growth area for Phoenix.
  - UGB expansion will require additional time and effort.
  2. Not realign Fern Valley Road
  - ODOT designers have evaluated multiple design options to avoid this additional EFU impact.
  - Changing the alignment was not possible due to design and safety considerations.

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Terry H. commented that Phoenix was being addressed for this growth pattern but added that Medford also has an aggressive plan on the east side. He said when you bring the RPS process in, that area will be considered South Valley Employment Center and it is significant to understand we are not just talking about residents we are also talking about employment. Nancy R. emphasized that all the planning actions needed to be done before the final EA and the only option at this point was to expand the Phoenix UGB.

NOISE

Impact Criteria

- Increase of 10 dBA over existing noise levels.
- Noise levels approach or exceed 67 dBA at residences, recreation areas, hotels, churches and schools; 72 dBA in commercial areas.
  (Increases of 1 to 3 dBA generally not perceptible to human ear.)

Impacts same with build alternatives

- Impacts evaluated at 36 different locations in project area to determine anticipated increase in noise.
- Noise impacts expected to be negligible with either build alternative.
- Minimal difference in noise impacts between No-Build and build alternatives in 2030.
- Maximum impact would be a 3 dBA increase at the residences on E. Bolz Road with either build alternative.
- Noise-impacted properties with build and No-Build alternatives (year 2030):
  - Noise-sensitive commercial properties along OR 99 (Bavarian Inn and Phoenix Motel)
  - Bear Lake Estates (36 residences along I-5)
  - Pear Tree RV Resort (pool area)
- Additional noise impacts in 2030 with build alternatives:
  - Two residences along E. Bolz Road

Mitigation

- Sound walls not normally considered for commercial areas.
- Sound walls considered for residences—but multiple driveways require gaps in wall, making it ineffective.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Section 4(f)

Impacts same with build alternatives

- Must avoid and minimize impacts to parks.
- Both build alternatives would require about 8,200 square feet of Bear Creek Greenway for bridge widening.
- Greenway access and path would be realigned—and would be safer than existing path.
- Path to remain open during construction.
- Jackson County Parks Dept. used Land and Water Conservation Funds in purchasing the Greenway parcels affected by project.
- ODOT required to replace park land used for project with properties of equivalent usefulness and location.

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RIGHT OF WAY

Impacts similar with build alternatives

Fern Valley Thru	N. Phoenix Thru
• 2 residences on E.Bolz Rd • 1 business (coffee stand) • 2 potential businesses (mobile food vendors)	Same as Fern Valley Thru
Estimated total ROW – 11.8 million	Estimated total ROW – 10.1 million

SOCIOECONOMIC

Impacts same with build alternatives

- Environmental justice populations (minority, low income):
  - No disproportionate impacts.
- Loss of on-street parking along E. Bolz Road.
- Local access:
  - Queuing along Fern Valley Road west of I-5 impacting access to NW and SW quadrants.

Impacts similar with build alternatives

- Local access:
  - Response times for emergency vehicles improved by both build alternatives; N. Phoenix Thru slightly improved over Fern Valley Thru.

Lenny N. asked from what point to what point is the half minute longer.
Nancy R. replied it was from Hwy 99 to the intersection at South Phoenix Road and Fern Valley Road.
Lenny N. asked if anyone had looked at the difference in time it would be for the two alternatives from the Fern Valley / North Phoenix intersection to the closest on-ramp.
Peter S. said most differences are on the east side, North Phoenix Thru is definitely faster on the east side to the interchange than Fern Valley Thru because there is no signal to go through.

  - Bicycle and pedestrian facilities included.
  - Adjacent business accesses affected by medians (OR 99 and Fern Valley Road)
- Community Cohesion:
  - Would not separate neighborhoods or the community as a whole—sense of community not substantially changed.

Impacts different with build alternatives

- Loss of off-street parking:
  - Fern Valley Thru: about 75
  - N. Phoenix Thru: about 67

Nancy R. said there was more off-street parking loss with Fern Valley Thru, some at Peterbilt. Bob L. agreed that there was off-street parking at Peterbilt. Lenny N. said he did not quite understand how it could be off-street parking because Peterbilt owned it. Tani W. commented that there would be ROW acquisition but it was not technically off-street parking because they owned it.

- Local access:

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- Travel time savings--20% greater with N. Phoenix Thru
- Fern Valley Thru: additional signal required to access NE quadrant; left turns required at Fern Valley Road/N. Phoenix Road.
- N. Phoenix Thru: about 0.2 mile additional distance to access SE quadrant.

VISUAL RESOURCES

Impacts same with build alternatives

- West of I-5:
  - Coleman Creek Estates—impacted by new access road to OR 99.
  - Removal of trees and houses on east side of E. Bolz Road.
  - Improved visual conditions on Bear Creek Greenway.
- East of I-5:
  - Changes in visual environment for rural residences in NE quadrant.

Impacts different with build alternatives

- East of I-5:
  - Fern Valley Thru: substantial change in visual environment near Fern Valley Road between S. Phoenix Road and Breckinridge Drive.
  - Fern Valley Thru: Visual impacts from individual homes in Phoenix Hills neighborhood would be minimal, but some changes to 1 or 2 homes.

David Lewin asked if the size of the relative intersections on the two alternatives would be similarly analyzed. He thought one of the intersections was considerably larger than the other. Nancy R. said she didn't think so but she would check on it.

WATER RESOURCES

Impacts similar with build alternatives

- Increase in impervious surface area:
  - Fern Valley Thru: 15.3 acres
  - N. Phoenix Thru: 11.2 acres
- No floodplain impacts

WETLANDS

Impacts similar with build alternatives

- Impacts to wetlands and other waters:
  - Fern Valley Thru: 3.45 acres
  - N. Phoenix Thru: 3.79 acres
- Minimal impacts to high-quality wetlands.

4. Review of Traffic Analysis

Peter Schuytema and Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT

Christina F. gave a PowerPoint presentation and explained to members that everything discussed in the presentation was future build analysis.

Future Volume Development

- RVCOG Model was used
- Volumes were post-processed

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- Base and Future year model volumes were compared to develop a relative difference.
- Difference was applied to 2004 volumes to create 2010 and 2030 volumes
- Volumes were distributed onto the alternative roadway networks

Common Analysis Results

- Northbound off ramp exceeds standard in 2030
- Intersections over standard:

2010

- Northbound ramp terminal

2030

- Fern Valley Road and OR 99
- Fern Valley Road and N Phoenix Road
- Fern Valley Road at both ramp terminals
- Southbound OR 99 and 1st Street

Christina presented maps with v/c ratios for the two alternatives. She said the numbers in black boxes were over standard. She discussed the intersection of Fern Valley Road and South Phoenix Road (N. Phoenix Thru) two way stop, allows for more flexibility for future growth as opposed to Fern Valley Thru.

Spacing Issues - Fern Valley Road

- Ramp terminal spacing is increased with the DDI, pushing the terminal intersections closer to the intersections to the east and west of the interchange
- Luman Road is too close to the Southbound ramp terminal, does not meet minimum spacing standards
- One mitigation would be to install dump loops on Fern Valley Road at the OR 99 and Luman Road intersections

Tani W. asked if there was an example of dump loops being used in Oregon. Peter S.-I think the bypass on the interchange off of Hwy 22 has them.

Spacing Issues - I-5

- The South Medford Interchange is being built south of the current location, and the new Fern Valley Interchange ramps are generally further north, bringing the two closer together
- The Oregon Highway Plan interchange spacing standards are no longer met
- There is no room for an additional interchange between South Medford and Fern Valley

Bruce S. thought the committee had discussed that there would have to be something at South Stage for the environmental impact of the traffic flow. Jerry M. said South Stage was classified as a road and as that area builds up UGBs expand it could switch over to a city designation and standards could change. Bruce S. was concerned that the Phoenix comp plan is in conflict with RPS and a South Stage interchange is not possible and he thought it needed to be put in the plan process. Peter S. said that in the future comp plans could change as it becomes more urban but for this current project there is no room between the two interchanges.

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David Lewin said he thought the point that Bruce S. raised was the statement that the interchange at South Stage is not possible and it will be repeated in other documents. He commented that it is a matter of emphasis and should be careful with the wording and make it clear that circumstances could change.

Christina presented maps of queuing for the two alternatives. She said both alternatives show a fair amount of queuing on Fern Valley Road with a trouble spot queue heading westbound at the southbound ramp between Luman and the ramp. She added that there was a fair amount of queuing on both intersections on the east side and that is what is driving travel time up.

Alternative Comparison

Peter S. said they looked at flexibility of design in the future above and beyond what was forecasted. He added that the west side does not have the capability to handle anything higher than forecasted and the interchange definitely has a capacity above and beyond. He said on the east side there is some difference: North Phoenix Thru can pump traffic through faster and Fern Valley Thru will result in more traffic. He said if more width was added to the Fern Valley approach on Hwy 99 (additional right and left hand lane) the west side would have more potential for growth.

Capacity and Queuing

Transportation Issue(1)	Alternative		
Capacity And Queuing	**No-build**	**Fern Valley Through**	**North Phoenix Through**
Number of intersections and segments not meeting HDM v/c's	5	7	7
Number of intersections and segments exceeding capacity	2	0	0
Flexibility in the design of the west side to accommodate traffic flows higher than forecasted?	No	No	No
Flexibility in the design of the interchange to accommodate traffic flows higher than forecasted?	No	Yes	Yes
Flexibility in the design of the east side to accommodate traffic flows higher than forecasted?	No	Some	Yes
Years of life beyond 2030 for east side[2]	18	13	25
Number of significant queue blockage sites[3]	20	12	13

[1] Transportation issues are based on the direct alternative area, so OR 99 north of Coleman Creek and south of northern end of the downtown couplet are excluded.

[2] Project lifespan is based on HDM 0.85 v/c ratio for MPO-area local interest roads at the main North/South Phoenix Road intersection in all three alternatives.

[3] Significant queuing is five percent or more of the peak hour.

Sensitivity Analysis - Common

- OR 99 and Fern Valley Road intersection and the interchange are at capacity; OR 99 and Bolz Lane is slightly over standard
- Continuous queuing exists on OR 99 from just south of Glenwood Road to south of 4th Street
- The area between Luman Road and the southbound ramp terminal is critical due to the limited spacing; leading to operational problems for the interchange in the future
- Extensive queuing on Fern Valley Road and OR 99 directly results from the OR 99 and Fern Valley Road intersection
- A 20% increase in traffic beyond forecasted levels would cause the queues from Fern Valley Road and OR 99 to back into the interchange; limiting the functionality of the alternatives

Peter S. emphasized that all problems in the future will radiate from OR 99 / Fern Valley intersection.

Sensitivity Analysis
Fern Valley Through

- North/South Phoenix Road intersection has a 10 year life beyond the design year
- Queues extend almost the entire distance from the northbound ramp terminal to North/South Phoenix Road on Fern Valley Road
- The Fern Valley Road and N/S Phoenix Road intersection has close to a maximum lane configuration
- Very sensitive to uneven growth. Additional growth on the westbound approach will significantly shorten the lifespan of the alternative

Peter S. explained that as the east side develops more lanes are required and more time is taken away from other movements. Major movements are going through and left. As more development occurs it will add pressure and take more time to go through the intersection. Side streets will start to impact the mainline.
David Lewin commented that this traffic analysis was based on the existing comp plans and does not include anything from RPS and when buildout from RPS occurs it will dump that very traffic into the intersection.
Peter S. said that this was a sensitivity analysis, a what-if scenario.

Sensitivity Analysis
N. Phoenix Through

- N/S Phoenix Road intersection has nine years of life beyond the design year; it could have 32 years if the westbound left turn lane was made a dual left
- Queuing on OR 99 is slightly less than with the Fern Valley Through Alternative
- The eastbound direction on Fern Valley Road is generally free of queues
- Westbound queues from OR 99 and Fern Valley Road intersection extend through the interchange to N/S Phoenix Road
- The interchange functions, but heavily meters traffic in the westbound direction

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Facility Operations
Measures of Effectiveness (MOE)

- Alternatives with lower delay, lower number of stops, lower travel time, and higher average speeds are more efficient
- Delay and number of stops is reduced to an individual vehicle basis
- MOE data was filtered so only the direct alternative area was left do effects of the I-5 mainline and OR 99 north and south of the project area would not affect the overall results
- The following table reflects a travel path from the OR 99 and Cheryl Lane intersection traveling east to either the northeast or southeast interchange quadrants

Facility Operations
Year 2030 Simulation Measures of Effectiveness

Measure	No-build	Fern Valley Through	North Phoenix Through
Delay per vehicle (s)	315	199	138
Stopped Delay per vehicle[2] (s)	265	149	100
Stops per vehicle	5.4	5.0	3.6
Travel Time (hr)	73	60	49
Average Speed (mph)	6	12	13

[1] The MOE's are based on averaged paths from OR 99 & Cheryl Lane to approximately either the northeast or southeast interchange quadrants.
[2] Includes stopped delay at intersections as well as standing and slow-moving (less than 7 mph) queues.

Lisa S. said this was not taking into consideration development that might need a traffic signal to get in and out. Peter S. explained that it considers existing development but not any additional development. Lisa S. added that there was already a development plan for the orchard with substantial big box apartments which will generate a lot of traffic and her assumption was that by 2030 there would be a signal light somewhere.
Tani W. commented that it will be what the City of Phoenix sees as their vision for the community.

Facility Operations

- 30% less overall delay, stopped delay, and number of stops per vehicle for N. Phoenix Through
- Travel time is 20% less with N. Phoenix Through
- Average speed is improved over the no-build; but is relative the same for both the Fern Valley and N. Phoenix Alternatives
- Speeds on the eastside are 50% higher for N Phoenix Through
- The North Phoenix Road Alternative makes Fern Valley Road more efficient

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Recommendation

North Phoenix Through

- Longer lifespan
- Less sensitive to additional future growth
- More operationally efficient

Joan H. said she did not understand how hours of delay would not affect air quality and asked where the emissions go. Jerry M. replied that the relative difference between the alternatives, if you experience substantial delay, may impact air quality on a micro-scale, but not as a region and it would not exceed standards.
Tani W. said that would be the year 2030 and emissions standards are constantly improving. She thought it would be difficult to make it relative because the outcome is unknown.
Lisa S. asked, speeds on the east side are 50% higher with North Phoenix Thru from where to where. Peter S. said from OR 99 to the North Phoenix intersection.
Nick F. said a number of mitigations and things that could be done were mentioned and he wondered if this analysis could list what some of the mitigations are. He said some are obvious and one could anticipate that this could happen in the future and some are unlikely or the impacts would be so great. He added that some improvements have solutions that could easily be achieved and wondered if they could be laid out and listed in this analysis.
Peter S. said just added something reasonable because the City of Phoenix does not want to widen Hwy 99.
Jerry M. commented that he thought it might be helpful to discuss in the EA potential mitigation options and quantify what the impacts might be.
Nick F. asked if the team could help members understand mitigations or improvements that would be reasonable, that have a possibility of occurring versus some that may not.
Tani W. added that ODOT could examine the flexibility of each scenario and examine how far to go with different problem areas. She said the City of Phoenix has looked outside the box and are trying to find a solution that works for the community.
Jerry M. said he thought the team could do that.
Peter S. added that some of these could be done as future projects and/or development mitigations. Nancy R. said that they were looking at a generic environmental analysis.
Lenny N. said he thought the critical reason to do that was because all of the conclusions about longer life spans and sensitivity to growth will never have an opportunity to kick in because the chokepoint is Hwy 99 and all the conclusions are moot points when it is considered that we will reach that point because of Hwy 99 long before east side alternatives have a chance to get there.
Bob K. commented that it had been his experience with draft EISs that they incorporate mitigations which take care of the impacts.
Jerry M. said that they will discuss some of the mitigating measures in the draft EA and the alternatives may be revised.
David Lewin said the group was discussing Bolz and Hwy 99 reaching capacity fairly early on and wondered if that statement was in respect of the overpass at South Stage or possibility of an interchange at South Stage.

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Peter S. explained that it is based on current conditions, South Stage is not in there, however if an overpass was built in a decade or two it could pull traffic away and other things could be done to delay reaching capacity.

5. Next Steps

Dick Leever, ODOT

Dick L. said it is planned that the IAMP CAC and PDT will meet in March and in the interim Peter and Christina will be working through the traffic operations analysis for the development scenario. He said the committee will be discussing Tech Memo 4 and looking at potential actions that will result from the analysis.

6. Public Comment

Pat Foley, RVCOG Facilitator

Mike Montero said he was representing a number of development interests in the Phoenix area and appreciated the opportunity to appear before the committee this evening. He said he would like to create a foundation for requests that we will make in behalf of his clients. He said there has been a struggle for funding and in this case it was a bit of a quandary for the City of Phoenix which does not want to surrender to background traffic capacity. He asked how the City of Phoenix would secure sufficient land use to ensure they have planned economic development ahead. He added that Phoenix would like to preserve capacity for citizens and in order to do that they will have to be supported by land use decisions. He said the City of Phoenix wants a job base and they need to meet the financial obligation that they have bound themselves to as part of this project with some form of development.

He hoped that ODOT and FHWA know that there is no way for the City of Phoenix to meet the needs and obligations.

He said that two years ago the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) changed the rules for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to allow dollars to be applied for planning projects of regional significance outside of UGBs. What that means, he added, is it let departments plan for projects such as South Stage Road and in addition to that, both Jackson County and the City of Medford currently have the South Stage Overpass Interchange project in their adopted Transportation System Plans (TSPs). He said there appears to be a regulatory framework for construction to occur if funding can be supplied and there is, at present, a funding strategy being developed to provide a leverage program for funding of that project provided the land use regulations can be changed and the urban standards can be met. He added that from a regional perspective Phoenix and through the RPS process surrounding communities believe nodal development works. He said the capacity Phoenix gains here is not necessarily surrendered to their neighbors because they are, at present, working diligently to supply for the City of Phoenix regional traffic alternatives. He commented that it is clear that the area of concern that ODOT and FHWA have is Fern Valley / Hwy 99 intersection. He said the intersection needed further study and that on behalf of his clients and the region they request that the ODOT take a very hard look at making that mitigation and working with the affected property owners and collaborating early on to develop some kind of mitigation for the impacts. He thought that the City of Phoenix, the region, and the farm community would be well-served if they could do that. He said that was his request and he thanked the committee for their time.

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7. Comfort Check

Pat Foley, RVCOG Facilitator

Nick Fortey – I'm comfortable, we're back, I think it's good to go through the process of where we are with the environmental documents and I am glad they have been posted to the website. It is all in Peter and Christina's minds and somehow it has to be transferred, the intricacies of what you are talking about are very important, and the problem is that it is hard to translate that, trying to understand where you make those improvements, the queues, thinking of the visual process.

Lenny Neimark – I'm good, Happy New Year.

Tani Wouters – I'm good.

Pauly Hinesly – Great.

Dack Doggett – Fine.

David Lowry – I think we basically have a good plan and I'm very pleased that we are going to make some refinements to make it even a better plan.

Mark Kellenbeck – Looking at the alternatives they are very close, mitigating some of the challenges and truly find a solution for all interests. I am highly interested in seeing what comes out to play in the next few months.

Terry Helfrich – I really appreciate Peter's presentation tonight, learned a lot, a lot of information. North Phoenix Thru is it, my gut feeling that is right, you have the data to show it. I appreciate Mike Montero's input and involvement in the regional traffic and where this valley needs to go. We all know Hwy 99 will be a bottleneck. He said it has been brought up at Phoenix City Council meetings that community members question the safety of the I-5 bridge built back in the 60s. He said there not only capacity but weight and trips have increased greatly and he wondered if there are structural concerns for the I-5 bridge.

Joan Haukom – Echo the thanks for everyone's hard work.

Bob Korfhage – Great information, it just confirms that it is hard to get over the interchange; everyone should consider getting a bicycle.

Bruce Sophie – City of Phoenix would like to give thanks for the traffic signal changes and we realize that some of it cannot be corrected. A major concern I have is the wording that there is no room for an additional interchange between South Medford and Fern Valley. I think that can be better worded. I don't want it to be stuck in people's minds. I hope the study goes through to look at turn lanes on Hwy 99. Thank you.

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Bob Lewis – Big thanks to ODOT and their staff for all the work they have done on this project and to the CAC and the PDT, hopefully we will move forward.

Vicki Guarino – A lot of good information tonight, I appreciate it.

Jerry Marmon – I'm happy, given me good direction.

Peter Schuytema – I'm fine.

Christina Fera-Thomas – I'm fine.

Dick Leever – Would like to thank the team for the positive attitude that everyone displayed, we have made progress. The problem about the bridge was brought up yesterday, need to go look at it. I looked at the bridge reports and it was inspected in '06 and doesn't show any severe problems at this time. The inspection reports are available in my office.

Bruce S. said one reason for this is if you sit on the bridge when a truck is going across it is like an earthquake and I think that is what people are concerned about.

Peter S. said to keep in mind the flexibility of the bridge is a design factor, the bridge moves, if you didn't feel it move it would fall apart.

Nancy Reynolds – Thank you for your patience. There will still be a lot of opportunity to comment.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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