

HIGHWAY 138E
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Project Development Team (PDT) Meeting #1
November 17, 2009, 2:00 – 4:00 PM
Roseburg City Hall, 3rd Floor, 900 SE Douglas Avenue

MEETING SUMMARY

Members in attendance:

Bob Grubbs, ODOT
James Burford, ODOT
Jack Cooley (for Mike Lane), Roseburg Fire
Rick Castle, Roseburg Public Works
Jeff Nelson, Roseburg Public Works
Rachel Amos (for Mike Luttrell), Douglas
County
Peter Schuytema, ODOT
Marion Thompson, City of Roseburg

Guests in attendance:

Nikki Messenger, City of Roseburg

Members absent:

Brian Davis, Community Development
Director
Nick Fortey, Federal Highway
Administration

Resource members:

John Raasch, ODOT
Elizabeth Stacey, ODOT

Consultant team:

Jennifer Danzinger, DEA
Kevin O’Hara, DEA
John Wiebke, DEA
Mike Hohbach, DEA
Adrienne DeDona, JLA
Doug Zenn, JLA

Meeting Goals:

- Discuss and approve group roles, responsibilities and protocols
- Review NEPA process, project purpose and need
- Review project goals and objectives
- Review project alternatives from previous planning study
- Discuss next steps, including open house and meeting schedule

Welcome:

Marion Thompson welcomed the group, explained the purpose of the project and initiated a round of introductions.

Adrienne DeDona reviewed the meeting agenda.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Overview:

Kevin O'Hara reviewed the contents of the project binders with the group. He explained that the project is a follow up to the Highway 138 Corridor Solutions Planning Study that developed alternatives to address congestion in downtown Roseburg. The previous process involved three committees: a citizens advisory group, a technical advisory group and a steering committee. This project will include two committees; a citizens advisory committee and a project development team.

Kevin explained that all of the alternatives developed during the Corridor Solutions Study require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance due to their size and complexity. The NEPA study process requires the following elements:

- Evaluation of a no-build scenario
- Review of social and environmental impacts
- Extensive public process, including stakeholder committees, open houses and a formal public hearing. Kevin explained that the public involvement role is critical and that the PDT and CAC play a role in listening to public input in order to make sound decisions.
- Evaluation of DOT Act Section 4(f) resource impacts. 4(f) resources are publicly or privately owned historic sites, publicly owned parks and recreational areas, and publicly owned wildlife refuges. Kevin explained that Roseburg has at least two parks and several historic/cultural districts and resources and that Section 4 (f) requires evaluating options for avoiding or mitigating impacts to these resources.

Kevin said that the Environmental Assessment (EA) process will hopefully end with a *Finding of No Significant Impact* (FONSI). Following the EA process, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will issue a FONSI or require the preparation of an EIS.

Kevin reviewed the decision-making chart and reiterated that the final decision would be made by FHWA; however, in order for them to issue a FONSI, the preferred alternative would have to be consistent with the City's Transportation System Plan (TSP). The City Council may need to amend the TSP to include the preferred alternative if it's not already identified in the TSP. Input from the CAC and the public will be presented to the PDT in order to make recommendations on project alternatives to include in the EA.

John Raasch noted that the process is intended to determine the best solution that works for the City and community and also meets the project's purpose and need statement. Ultimately, the project is intended to be eligible for federal funding.

Marion added that if there are impacts to social or environmental resources that are able to be mitigated, a FONSI may still be issued.

Kevin reviewed the project schedule:

- November 2009: project initiation – CAC and PDT meetings

- January/February 2010: initial public open house
- Spring/Summer 2010: 10% design of alternatives, CAC and PDT meetings, 2nd public open house
- Summer/Fall 2010: narrow alternatives to 2 or 3 and forward to 20% design
- Fall 2010: CAC and PDT meetings, 3rd open house
- Spring 2011: technical reports, draft EA
- Summer/Fall 2011: issue draft EA for comment, CAC and PDT meetings, formal public hearing
- Winter 2011: respond to public comment
- Winter 2011/Spring 2012: FHWA Decision

Purpose and Need:

Kevin reviewed the project purpose and need and explained that the focus is resolving a transportation issue. Kevin noted that the purpose and need can be refined as the project moves forward. He also explained that the alternatives included in the EA must meet the purpose and need. Kevin said that the PDT will be responsible for screening the alternatives and determining which to eliminate from consideration. The primary screening tool is the purpose and need statement; however the goals and objectives also will add alternatives evaluation capabilities.

John Raasch added that traffic modeling and other analysis will be done to help determine how well the alternative meets the project’s purpose and need.

Marion told the group that it could find additional project background in the Highway 138 Corridor Solutions Study on the City’s webpage at:

<http://www.cityofroseburg.com/commDevelop/commNews/commNews.php>

Kevin summarized the project purpose and need as follows: (a complete version is included in tab 4 of the project binder):

The project purpose is to address mobility, safety, connectivity, and multi-modal needs on Highway 138 between I-5 Exit 124 and Fulton Street.

The project needs are summarized as follows:

1. Address congestion downtown and along Stephens Street
2. Improve east-west travel across the railroad tracks is shut down when trains pass through the at-grade crossings,
3. Address impacts to freight from some of the tight turning curb radii,
4. Bridge existing gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian transportation system.

Bob Grubbs asked if v/c ratio or level of service would be used for the project. Marion replied that the Roseburg TSP converted to v/c and that all city traffic studies are done using v/c. It was generally agreed that the state highway would be designed to meet state standards.

Group Protocols:

Doug Zenn reviewed and proposed informal group operating protocols for meeting and decision-making procedures, including:

- Decisions will be consensus-based in order to move the process forward (i.e. the facilitator will ask to see head nods from the group before moving on).
- Materials should be reviewed ahead of time, especially the agenda in case something needs to be added.
- Everyone shall participate at meetings, including bringing issues forward to the group in a timely manner.
- Issues may be worked on outside of meetings when possible.
- When there are disagreements, the group will isolate the issue and seek a path to resolution. This could include obtaining more detailed input from:
 - public input
 - technical data
 - small group work

Doug explained that the CAC protocols will be more prescriptive. CAC members have a responsibility to represent their respective groups or organizations and to keep those groups informed about the project.

Marion requested that all communication to and from the PDT go through her for consistency purposes. She noted that most communication will be coordinated through e-mail.

John Raasch explained that the FHWA is the final decision-making body for this project. For clarity, actions that lead to the final decision will be characterized as a recommendation in the EA document. John also noted that it will be important to capture and document the reasons why an alternative is eliminated.

Goals and Objectives:

Adrienne reviewed and summarized the goals and objectives as follows (a complete version is included in tab 4 of the project binder):

1. Improve circulation and more efficiently move traffic between I-5 and Diamond Lake Boulevard.
 - a. Meet design standards for projected travel demand and vehicle types
 - b. Minimize vehicle queues and traffic flow interruptions
 - c. Improve spacing between access points
2. Mitigate conflicts between rail and vehicular traffic and improve freight travel routes.
 - a. Resolve traffic blockages due to passing trains
 - b. Provide safe and efficient movement of freight traffic between Diamond Lake Boulevard and I-5.
3. Mitigate adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources.
 - a. South Umpqua River, Deer Creek, and associated flood plains.
 - b. Unstable sloped areas

- c. Native species and their habitats
 - d. Aquatic resources
 - e. Provide storm water treatment and control
 - f. Archaeological, historic, and cultural resources
 - g. Section 4(f) and 6(f) resources. 6(f) resources are parks that have received special funding. Lincoln Park is identified as a 6(f) resource.
4. Develop a solution that at least preserves local efforts to expand economic development.
 - a. Serve projected regional growth expansion
 - b. Maintain and enhance access to downtown
 - c. Improve long-distance travel
 5. Minimize the community impacts and maintain livability of surrounding neighborhoods.
 - a. Preserve historic neighborhoods such as Laurelwood.
 - b. Avoid disproportionate impacts to low-income and minority populations.
 - c. Minimize adverse impacts to existing residences and businesses.

Suggested changes to the goals and objectives made by the group are as follows:

- Remove the word 'safe' under goal 2 related to resolving traffic blockages due to passing trains by enabling a 'safe' crossing that maintains linkages between east and west Roseburg.
- Adding the word 'highway' under goal 2 related to movement of freight traffic between Diamond Lake Boulevard and I-5.
- Including a statement regarding emergency services.
- Including other historic neighborhoods such as Downtown and Mill-Pine to goal 5.

Marion noted that the City has an Access Management Plan related to goal 1.

Kevin explained that some of the goals listed are obligated by federal law, such as items listed in goal 3 and 5.

John Raasch explained that the goals and objectives can be used as a way to measure the effectiveness of the alternatives. That the goals are things we want an alternative to do.

Project Alternatives:

John Wiebke reviewed the various project alternatives, including the original 19 alternatives evaluated during the Corridor Solutions Study. The 19 alternatives explored were narrowed to three during the study, however this project will take a step back to review eight of the project alternatives that meet purpose and need. The following eight alternatives will be the starting point for this project (for detailed information see the PowerPoint presentation prepared for the committee meetings):

- 1a) Modified no-build alternative
- 2a) Widens Washington Avenue to a 4 lane roadway and Oak becomes a secondary, 2 lane roadway.

- 2c) Same as 2a, but uses Rose instead of Stephens as a major connector. This would impact the Public Safety Center.
- 3a) Involves a new bridge north to Stephens . The intersections would be close together and involve a large footprint. This option vacates Washington Avenue bridge.
- 3d) Involves elevating the railroad tracks over the center of Roseburg. This idea came from the railroad. It would have to start as far back as Mill-Pine neighborhood and it would be very expensive.
- 4a) Involves a new bridge and shifting alignment to the north. It would need 30 feet of clearance for the above grade crossings. The landing areas needed for this alternative would need to be considered.
- 6a) east/west couplet that involves Stephens as a one-way street and Winchester as a one-way street.
- 6b) east/west couplet similar to 6a, but includes the new bridge to Stephens.

John Wiebke noted that alternative 1a could be folded into both 6a and 6b.

John Raasch said that input about all eight alternatives would be collected from the public at an upcoming open house. The public will also be encouraged to provide any other suggested alternatives.

Next Steps:

Adrienne explained that the next meeting would take place after the open house sometime in January or February, pending input from the CAC. She said that open house would be an informal, drop-in style format with display boards and other background information on the project and the eight alternatives just presented to the PDT. The open house date and location would be determined by the project team following input from the CAC. The committees will be notified by e-mail of the open house and upcoming meeting date.

Adrienne added that the meeting summary will be sent to the PDT following the meeting and will be posted on the City’s project web page once it’s up and running.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:40 p.m.