

I-5 WRB Art & Design Teams Meeting #4b—Bundle 1
Thursday, November 12, 2009
LCOG Buford Conference Room, Eugene
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Attendees: Peg Butler, Buster Simpson, Bundle 1; Scott Wylie, John Rose, Design Enhancement Panel; Drake McKee, Carl Deaton, Don Angermayer, ODOT Maintenance, Materials and Roadway; Dick Upton, ODOT WRB Project Manager; Adam Kuby, Lee Imonen, Suzanne Lee, Robin Craig, Bundle 2 [partial]

Staff: Don Kahle, Facilitator; Megan Banks; Douglas Beauchamp; Justin Lanphear

Introductions

Those present introduced themselves.

Discussion with ODOT

Peg said that their team had the beginnings of ideas and would like ODOT's help with where to put their energies.

Peg noted that bundle 1 might have the largest installation budget and she described their geographic area. Don noted that the bundles are organic and there will be blending among the bundles. Peg added that the design teams will be sharing design ideas.

Buster said that artists are getting more involved with infrastructure. With this project, there is interest in value-added overlays to the things that already have to happen.

Buster asked about the throw fence and the railroad right-of-way. He also asked if snow plows needed to be considered in the designing. Don Angermayer said that they do plow.

Douglas asked if the protective fencing was continuous over Franklin and if it was budgeted. He thought the bundle 1 team should probably have that information. Buster added that the railing and the security fencing should be cohesive.

Buster asked if ODOT had experience with silica carbide. Drake responded that they had not yet. Don clarified that this would be on the deck and asked about the rutting out of the travel lanes. Buster responded that yes, there would be wear. Scott added that the wear itself makes a pattern and could be quite beautiful.

Peg noted that they hoped to overlay and weave in safety concerns with their designs. For example, the railings. Carl said that if a new type of rail was desired, it would have to be tested by FHWA, etc. Peg responded that they don't want to go "crazy out of the box" with their designs.

Buster asked if steel was being used for the railing. Carl said he would look at plan set and confirm.

Buster asked if there were any issues with painting. Don Angermayer said that was okay if ODOT doesn't have to maintain the paint. It may be pressure washed about every 10 years. Don Angermayer relayed that trying to avoid powder coating was probably advisable. Scott noted that potentially there is a small maintenance factor depending what look artist is looking for. He said that may be that change is desirable for the artist.

Buster asked what life cycle of the bridge wear-wise is planned. Carl and Don Angermayer responded that likely 20-25 years.

Peg asked about the underside of the bridge at Franklin—could there be the potential for etching or could the concrete be seeded? Peg and Buster asked for clarification of the structure underneath—was it precast? It was determined that the plan set would have that information. Carl clarified that his role is to review the plan set relative to roadway. He noted that on top of bridge, any items would be hard to change from established standards. Underneath Franklin would likely to be a lot easier to modify.

Peg asked if they proposed using aggregate, would breaking off be an issue? Carl responded that yes, it would likely be an issue if over the road below. Maybe a barrier forming another barrier could alleviate that potential problem. Buster asked about “concrete poetry” and “precast text.” Carl responded that forms are expensive. He said what about something that bolted on to a face? Buster agreed that appliqué may be the way to go.

Scott added that continuity is important for bridge and underneath the bridge—maybe something that flows rather than creates a shocking disruptive event to the sense of flow.

Peg asked about color, something like green glass that sparkles. She agreed with Scott that it shouldn't look completely different—not a disturbance but an “ah ha” moment.

Buster said the railing tube could echo below with a sense of the rise and fall. There would be a transitional end, probably the south side with that 10' fence. He asked how that transition might occur—perhaps segue into the fourth rail as part of the design feature reflective of coming from the mountains to the valley; a pulling the foothills and curving of the arch in.

Don Angermayer said that if something gets hit or damaged, ODOT needs to have to drawings to replicate it. Buster responded that there would be CAD drawings available. Perhaps the design is value-engineered in or behind or on the safety fence. Carl said it might be hidden if placed behind something.

Buster said the arch was interesting because it understood that the community wanted to be able to read the arch from above as well as below. Likely to be subtle.

Carl said the railroad usually likes its right-of-way protected. The typical protective fencing curves in to the road so no one can throw anything over the road. Justin added that the only area required to have protective fencing over it was the railroad. DEP and land-use plans note that a potential design enhancement could include having a continuous rail or fence from the end of the bridge railing to the UPRR protection fence.

It was clarified that there were bike paths on both sides of Franklin. There was no requirement to have protective fencing over Franklin. Carl said there was discussion about widening Franklin to seven lanes.

Buster asked and Justin confirmed that 10' high fence with a maximum 4" openings was required for the railroad. The standard design is being called out right now. Maintenance has requested that pieces be created that are easily replaced. Carl echoed this by suggesting they be given information on how to replace an element, etc.

Scott said that he had asked Larry about standard designs—are there more than one? He suggested that the bundle 1 team look at all the options.

Don and Justin described the 40' area on the east side of I-5, north of the Patterson Slough/Canoe Canal Bridge. They explained that the detour roadway extends farther to east than new roadway and that the existing embankment that is out there now—about 40'—is going to be flat at the top. This is a spatial design enhancement opportunity. Basically ODOT is leaving the existing embankment and stripping road off of it. Justin said it is currently shown as top soil and seeding. The slope after the approx. 40-ft is steep—a 2H:1V slope. The only visual obstruction is a 42" high concrete barrier at edge. Buster asked what barrier would be composed of and Justin replied that he thought it would probably be a concrete barrier.

Peg talked about the columns from the detour bridge. Justin responded that is it probable that three of the columns have the potential to be saved. He noted that the Willamette River Greenway permit may impact which columns could be saved. Peg asked about saving columns on north side. Justin said that new embankment and area within the greenway likely impact that and a land use finding would have to be developed quickly since it is outside the palette that has been presented.

Justin talked about the greenway and permitting. He noted that a component of the permitting addresses views to and from the river. If the columns are kept, probably the lower the better. He added that the team could try to get a read from the City of Eugene to go higher.

Don Angermayer said discussions with his boss about leaving the decommissioned bridge columns triggered issues for maintenance such as tagging, climbing, hiding, seismic, maintenance and liability. The group asked if people have been tagging or climbing the columns now. Don Angermayer said that no, they see it more as a potential issue. Justin said there was some tagging on the columns and Willamalane has been painting over them.

Buster noted that this location is a historic crossing—the first bridge and marks of man interjecting with nature. When he thinks about bringing the bridges and columns down, he sees them as aging—with moss, etc., they would become part of detritus on the site.

Carl said that the columns may be in the way of the viaduct extension. Don Angermayer asked about after they are sawed off, what about using the rest for the viaduct.

Douglas observed that presenting the columns as “artwork” to the permitting agencies would likely be perceived differently than being presented as an existing artifact. Justin agreed.

Douglas mentioned the points Don made earlier and noted they apply to all the bundles.

Adam noted that vegetation could be used to keep people away. Justin said that because this is a federal project, native plants, etc. are being used to restore area. Lee asked about the long-term maintenance of natives. Justin responded that the site will be maintained for five years. The first year will be maintained by the contractor while the second through fifth years will be maintained by ODOT. There are survival standards that have to be complied with.

Peg asked about landscaping along the approaches. She wondered about the foothills and mountains with more thickly plantings to the south for a darker feeling, then arriving at the river and progressing to a lighter north side. She asked how the north side will be planted. Justin described locations on the table map. He discussed that the proposed plantings on the northeast side generally match Peg’s concept. He noted that coniferous species will be planted on the south side. He added there is a wetland area with a lot of existing vegetation currently helping to visually buffer the industrial area of Glenwood immediately adjacent to the ODOT right-of-way, but additional plant materials would be planted in front of that. Peg said she will check-in with Justin later for more details but she definitely wants to reinforce the contrast from foothills and valley.

Don Kahle introduced Dick Upton.

Scott asked about the visibility of arch and plant buffering—would it preclude more distant views? Peg responded that she would consider that.

Peg said that she would like to discuss railing, fencing, and silica carbide seeding. Dick said he would check-in with Don. Don said not an issue for him.

Buster asked again about railing material. Dick said he believed they were proposed as galvanized steel that could be painted, powder coating, etc. Two railing options may be possible. And it is likely we would want the one with the most visibility. The safety fence over the railroad is still under discussion. Don Angermayer suggested that perhaps some homework ahead of time if anything is needed to be refabricated, etc.

Peg asked about vertical windmills. They are fairly narrow and not used very often now. Are there red flags regarding those? They may include integrated elements such as light. They could even be hooked into the grid. She added that broader ideas include the existing utility towers, noting that they are a dominant form out there even though people don't see them. She said that the vertical windmills could fit in utility towers and could become more than just a static element.

Dick responded that the towers are a separate conversation because they are not ODOT's. Power generation, such as wind, could potentially be something the project could use. Don Angermayer said getting back into the grid is not desirable for ODOT's staff. Buster talked about ideas around the old towers and the sustainability of communities.

Buster asked about the utility setback.

Justin noted that both sides have high transmission lines that affect what can be done. The utilities don't have an easement on ODOT's right-of-way. He added that the utilities have the power to pretty much affect what is being done in their right-of-way. Justin said he would also need to address land use permitting regarding this and he would need to start a conversation with the cities since they are outside the areas that were shown for potential design enhancements. Dick said he liked the idea but would need to figure out where locationally and where we are at with the technology.

Buster discussed ideas for poetic signage. Dick responded that we would probably benefit from massaging existing signage standards rather than trying to get something completely different. Carl noted that FHWA set the signage standards and he agreed to send more information to Buster.

Douglas mentioned the office in Salem that deals with approvals of attractions.

Buster asked about sole sourcing and sculpture. Dick responded that elements are likely to be in the construction contract but it would be best to talk about them on a case-by-case basis.

Don Kahle mentioned that bundle 2 was also very interested in talking to Dick.

Robin asked Dick about placing additional columns in the landscape. Dick noted that maintenance budgets focus on safety and preserving the system and cautioned that aesthetics are low on the maintenance list. ODOT is likely to come in with gray paint to deal with something such as tagging.

Robin asked about art or free walls, maybe that change with an event. Typically artists are respectful of other artists. The beauty is that it gives them a space instead of the columns or mill race. Dick asked Don Angermayer for his input and he responded that if ODOT wasn't liable for safety or maintenance, he wouldn't have an issue with the art walls. Dick asked what long-term maintenance would occur. Robin said that

maintenance may be limited. She would like to see a neighborhood group or the arts council take on the maintenance. Adam added that this area is outside the usual area for policing, maintaining, etc.

Don Angermayer asked about a potential park and ride, and who would maintain that. Justin responded that there was the potential for trailhead parking.

Dick observed there was more discussion needed on maintenance.

Suzanne said there is the potential for the graffiti artists to maintain it themselves.

Adam asked about columns as potential habitat for bats or birds. He asked if drilling into them would compromise structural integrity. Dick responded that ODOT was already designing for bat habitat. Don Angermayer said many OTIA projects are doing this also.

Dick said that in talking with construction personnel, problems exist with leaving the columns. It is still a delicate issue because form work, etc. is needed near the railroad. Adam asked about saving other columns and Dick responded that means costs goes up because the contractor has to work around them. Adam asked about saving columns on the north side. Justin responded that there are more stakeholders; Dick added that park groups such as the CPC, who are typically interested in naturalness, would need to weigh in.

Dick noted that with respect to the columns from the detour structure, we have more time to think about that. Anywhere else we are likely to get push back about having to work around them. Dick could go back and ask for more detail about costs.

Lee observed that there were areas that overlap between bundles 1 and 2. He added it is interesting to hear about what Buster and Peg are thinking about.

Bundle 2 staff, except for Lee, left for a site visit.

Peg asked about trees growing up through 16' gap. Justin responded that you 1) don't want trees that follow over into bridge and 2) maintenance of branches as trees grow. Don Angermayer said that their under bridge inspection truck (that looks for cracks, etc.) needs to have access. The truck includes a snooper crane that can access everything. Douglas asked about a gap that the crane might allow and Lee asked about fencing along the bridges. Don Angermayer said they end up extending above the bridge as well as the railing.

Buster and Peg asked about wind studies that might have been completed for engineering of the bridge. Dick responded that haven't done lateral studies and he wouldn't expect wind to be an issue here. Buster said were hoping to take advantage of study if one had been done.

Peg talked about some of their ideas for using wind.

Peg asked about the sound walls. Justin responded that neighbors have bought off on the aesthetic for the southbound soundwall and he is working with the contractor to determine the cost increase. He described the general look.

Buster and Peg asked about the sign bridge and the trusses. Dick noted that they were designed to allow for extra weight and it would be interesting to have wind generation there.

Justin added that when enhancements are outside the local jurisdictions, such as the ODOT right-of-way, there is more flexibility. He described the local jurisdictions' boundaries on the map.

Peg asked what the sign said. Dick responded there were actually three signs. Justin referred to the working drawings and the group discussed the sign bridge design. Peg asked about safety issues on sign bridge, such as climbing, such as to tag.

Justin noted that the more we can locate art in the areas already identified, the easier it will be with the cities.

Peg asked about wind generation on columns. She understands we would need to be sure that is not an issue for habitat. Justin said knowing as soon as possible would be helpful. Carl asked if the were wind generation elements on the sign bridge, would they be a distraction? He thought probably not. Peg noted that they were fairly translucent.

Don Kahle asked Dick if we could add extra signs. Dick responded that probably not because of MUTCE.

Peg said that Pat was excited about the columns and creating a log jam aesthetic—columns holding up decking or columns lashed together, maybe with protective screening in a Kalapuya basket weaving pattern. Peg anticipates some of the issues with doing this may relate to seismic. Carl said that if things are left on top, that would be problematic.

Don Angermayer asked if anyone had thought of doing a totem pole slip-over on the column.

Carl asked if the columns could be used in the park (within easement so they would be maintained and the city or someone else assumes liability) for climbing, etc.

Justin said that if he was required to give a maximum height for any existing bridge columns proposed to remain, he would offer no higher than Franklin, which would be about 20 feet, as the views from the river are not affected as much at that height. Douglas suggested that we don't let go of columns on the south side—maybe they would be low and perhaps almost a playground element. They could be statement as well as an artifact.

Lee added that the columns were on the bottom of bundle 2 and the top of bundle 1.

Carl said there were many issues that would need to be addressed related to the columns.

Justin said that the decommissioned columns are coming out very soon, like in a couple weekends. Justin noted that the detour columns north of Franklin embankment appear to fall within the viaduct path and clarified these are likely off the table for saving. Justin said that some detour columns occur in a jurisdictional wetland and we would have to cycle back through the review cycles if we want to address them, making them unlikely for saving. He noted that there were a few that were not within the wetland, perhaps two that have the best chances for being saved.

The group confirmed cutting a column down to a certain level would need to be asked.

Lee and Douglas discussed cutting the detour columns at the viaduct path to exactly at-grade and paving around as an opportunity. Would see the cut-off rebar, etc. while referring to the history that was there. Justin thought this was good because potential stormwater issues would be addressed and it was not so much of a land use permitting issue.

Don asked what the mill race interpretation might include. The group agreed this was more an issue for bundle 2.

Follow-up and Action Items

- Carl will send more FHWA signage standards information to Buster.

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