

Summary – Meeting #12

Community Advisory Group – I-5 Willamette River Bridge Project

July 15, 2008, 10:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Singer Room, Eugene Public Library (100 West 10th Ave.)

ATTENDANCE

CAG Members

- Trevor Taylor – Natural Resources Supervisor, Eugene Parks and Open Space Division
- Eric Gunderson – Former President, American Institute of Architects SWO Chapter
- Scott Wylie – Springfield Resident
- David Sonnichsen – CPC for Whilamut Natural Area
- Bob Kline – Chair, Harlow Neighbors

Resource Team

- Ann Sanders – ODOT Project Lead
- Tim Dodson – ODOT Project Liaison/CPM, ODOT Bridge Delivery Unit
- Lou Krug – Project Manager, Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners
- James Gregory – Environmental Task Leader, Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners
- Jamie Damon – Public Involvement Coordinator, JLA
- Kalin Schmoldt – Public Involvement Assistant, JLA

Other Attendees

- Larry Fox – OBEC
- Kevin Parrish – Hamilton
- Larry Gescher – Slayden
- Chris Henry - City of Eugene
- Steve Turner – ODOT
- John Ferguson – TY Lin

Handouts (emailed ahead of time):

- Agenda
- CAG meeting summary draft #11
- CAG meeting summary final #10

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Jamie Damon welcomed the committee and explained that the meeting would be oriented towards discussion of the weighting of the project goals, the “Bridge View” event, and CAG meetings to follow. Jamie noted that input on the goal weighting had been received from several of the absent members and would be included as part of the discussion.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Summary of Meeting #11 – There were no comments on the meeting summary.

PROJECT UPDATE

Status of EA/Land use coordination – Lou Krug said that comments had been received on the internal study committee review draft of the Revised Environmental Assessment (REA). Full FHWA comments were expected soon although FHWA will not sign off on the REA until the requisite land use agreements are in place.

Concerning land use actions, responses have been prepared to the comments received from staff and the public at recent planning commission hearings and deliberations on the land use amendments have been set for the end of July. Approval of the metro plan amendments would allow FHWA to approve the draft REA in August. Tim noted that the joint planning commissions were unanimous in recommending approval of the amendments to their elected bodies.

Lou noted ongoing discussions with Parks and Open Space and the Whilamut Natural Area. Upcoming meetings will address agreements that also need to be in place before FHWA will sign off on the REA. There will be a meeting on Friday to discuss issues related to the parks, primarily focused on mitigating construction impacts and potential park enhancement opportunities. Tim noted that there had been a preplanning meeting this morning to talk about Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs). A field trip to the bridge site is scheduled after the Friday PDT meeting.

Follow up on “bridge gap” discussion – Jamie reminded the group that the possibility had been raised of eliminating one in-water work period by reducing the gap between the bridges. ODOT maintenance had weighed in strongly on the issue and the PDT decided that the original 16 foot gap made the most sense. Jamie noted that Pat French had also sent an email expressing her concerns about using a smaller gap and what that would mean for plantings beneath the bridge. Tim explained that providing access to the bridge piers was one of the factors that required the larger gap. Jamie added that immediate time or cost savings could be offset by long term maintenance complications due to a narrower access space.

David Sonnichsen requested a copy of Pat’s email. Jamie offered to send a copy to the CAG.

Artist Community Involvement – Jamie said that she had arranged a one-on-one meeting for tomorrow morning with Douglas Beauchamp of the Lane Arts Council to discuss ongoing ideas for artist involvement. More information will be available to share at the August CAG meeting.

DISCUSS OUTCOMES OF THE GOALS WEIGHTING SURVEY

Kalin Schmoldt said that a good cross section of seven CAG members and six PDT members had participated in the survey. Respondents were asked to allocate 100 points to the seven goals in order to determine how each should be weighted. Respondents were generally consistent in how the points were allocated: Goals C and D consistently received the highest number of points, while Goal F consistently received the fewest.

Kalin summarized comments from the online forum discussion, noting how respondents had chosen to prioritize their point allocations: Goal A was described as a key transportation goal. Respondents felt that Goal B was important, though unlikely to help differentiate the bridge types and some respondents allocated fewer points to that goal for this reason. Goal C received the second most points, apparently due to interest in preserving the pathway connections beneath the bridge. Goal D received the most points with little discussion, though Charlotte had raised the issue

of showing examples of above deck elements as an aesthetics priority. Goal E was prioritized based on its transportation emphasis as well as the hope that sustainability will remain a key part of the discussion. Goal F was consistently ranked low because respondents felt that it was already being achieved and did not differentiate between the bridge types. Goal G was perceived as important, though respondents felt that the Goal G objectives were largely covered by the other goals.

Bob Kline asked whether there was a notable difference between the CAG and PDT responses. Jamie said that there were not significant gaps between any of the responses. Tim said that he had allocated his points towards goals with a transportation emphasis and though some of his preferred goals didn't fare as well, he appreciated the melding of viewpoints. He also commented that some respondents may have read the emphasis of the goals differently, noting that both Goals A and C address the use of the paths.

Trevor Taylor asked about the purpose of the weighting. Tim explained that each of the bridge types would be independently scored by ODOT and the A&E and CM/GC firms. Each group will look at the differentiating factors between the types and bring their specific knowledge to bear on determining which type best satisfies each objective. The weighting factors will be used to score the goals and create a summary basis for a conversation about a preferred alternative. The CAG will then be able to review and understand why the types scored the way they did and revisit the weighting factors if necessary. Jamie explained that the point of the exercise is to highlight potential areas of discussion. The CS3 matrix applies criteria to bridge construction for the OTIA III program, though this project is applying the criteria in a more collaborative way. Tim noted that there are five goals in the OTIA III program and each has subcategories with corresponding definitions. Tim said that John Fergusson has created objective criteria corresponding to each of the subcategories in the seven Willamette Bridge goals. Lou noted that the goal for the CAG is to recommend weights to the PDT. The final weights will be set on Friday by the PDT.

Scott Wylie observed that the nature of art and design will change with each bridge type and that the weighting does not necessarily set the type. He said that if the CAG determines that a different type should be chosen, it could be changed. Tim noted that type must be selected by August 8. After that point, the discussion will be focused on the implications of the chosen type.

Chris Henry asked whether there would be an opportunity for elected officials to weigh in on the type selection. Tim said that they were not planning to further vet the decision after August 8. Chris asked that the cities have the opportunity to note potential conflicts with the selected type and he requested a more formal memo on the subject. Jamie asked Chris to consider how to note the decision. Rich Hazel asked whether the city would challenge the type selection. Chris said that the staff would follow the CAG recommendation, though the council could have a different recommendation or preference. Tim noted that the assumption has been that the CAG and community would be involved in the decision and that the eventual selection would represent the perspective of the council members' constituencies. Tim noted that the city council could refuse to permit the project which would require going to the Land Use Board of Appeals. Tim said that he felt there was a strong public involvement basis in the type selection that involved Eugene, Springfield, and Lane County. Jamie agreed with Chris that it was important to communicate proactively. Bob noted that any objections to the type selection would need to be explained. Larry Gescher asked whether the councils have been educated about the process to this point. Tim said that they have made presentations to councils and commissions on the project. Bob suggested that a document be issued that describes the decision process. Jamie offered to discuss the need to inform

different entities about the type selection at the Friday PDT meeting. Lou noted that objections to the type could create schedule issues, and he hoped that concerns could be expressed as part of the existing process.

Bob suggested a press release that emphasized the type selection decision on August 8. Jamie said that a press release was forthcoming to announce the open house event and the survey results. Eric Gunderson suggested that the decision process be highlighted in the press release and noted that the strength of the process to date should discourage the need to contest the type selection.

Recommended weights to the PDT

Trevor said that he saw sustainability competing with cost-effectiveness in Goal E as efforts toward sustainability are not necessarily “cost-effective.” Trevor asked for more clarity with regard to the objectives and he requested that the goal be revisited in the future. Kevin Parrish suggested that sustainability wouldn’t serve as a significant differentiator between the types. Bob asked how sustainability had been explained to the contractor. Tim said that CS3 prescribes certain specific sustainability requirements such as the use of biodiesel and recycling. Sustainability often has more to do with demolition although the materials used in construction also make a difference. Tim noted that scores will be available at the August 5 CAG meeting and the group will be able to see how each subcategory affects the score of each goal. Jamie noted that the CM/GC team was present at the table and aware of the importance of the sustainability issue.

Tim noted that the prioritization of the aesthetics goal and other goals relate to community interests, and seem to reflect the desire for a community sensitive solution.

Scott suggested that Goal E appeared to be the most unwieldy goal in terms of the number of subjects it addresses. He also noted that sustainability has short term and long term implications.

David said that he was reluctant to make changes to the goals that have already been voted on and he agreed with Trevor and Scott on Goal E.

Lou asked about the range of point allocations for each goal. Jamie noted that individuals tended to allocate to the goals consistently. No one attempted to over-weight specific goals.

Rich confirmed that no value could go over 100. Kalin said that the values had to add to 100. Rich suggested that people might have been reluctant to over or under-weight the goals, making the spread between rankings more important. Jamie said that the allocations were consistent enough that a shift of 10 points or so by any one response wouldn’t have made much difference.

Larry Gescher asked how SurveyMonkey works. Kalin explained that SurveyMonkey is an online form-survey that was coupled with a separate blog to allow discussion of the goals.

Lou asked whether anyone had revisited their answers and changed them. No one had.

Bob said that he appreciated the exercise.

Chris asked whether the forum was now closed. Jamie said that the responses received to date would constitute the recommendation to the PDT.

Trevor asked about the overlap on the Goal G objectives. John Ferguson said the overlap was due to combining the OTIA III programmatic goals with the project specific goals. Trevor noted that the CS3 goal sheet had included more than were listed. Jamie said that the list had been refined and condensed by the project team. Tim noted that the initial lists contained even more overlap and had been reorganized. None of the objectives had been removed. Trevor said that the community goals appear to be reflected by the scores, though he said he was curious whether Goal G served as a catch-all for important objectives. Tim observed that the other goals contained many of the objectives included under Goal G.

Eric said that he considered some of the goals to be non-differentiators and that he considered the list to be a tool for selecting the bridge type, not choosing what is necessarily right or wrong for the project. John said that the results appeared to represent a typical spread, indicating that all of the goals were important and that none was significantly more important than the others.

Trevor thanked Kalin for putting the tool together on such short notice. Kalin said he was happy to talk more about the use of the survey and blogs if people had questions.

“BRIDGE VIEW” PUBLIC EVENT

Jamie noted that the newsletter will hit mailboxes later in the week. The event is being called a “Bridge View” design kickoff and it will occur on Saturday, July 26, from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Setup will be at 8:30 a.m. The event will include:

- Outcomes of survey
- Updated bridge type renderings
- Design elements to consider
- Self guided tours
- “View Stations” with the design team at:
 - Knickerbocker Bridge
 - Frog Pond
 - Canoe Canal
- Meet the construction and design teams
- Refreshments

Jamie noted that the event would be located at the ODOT staging area next to the bridge. Self-guided tours would take visitors to three bridge viewpoints. Each viewpoint will have a member of the design staff available to address tradeoffs on the designs. Visitors will have a handout booklet that includes copies of the displays and a comment form to capture their ideas. Jamie noted that people have typically enjoyed similar events in the past.

Ann asked whether the comments to be collected at the event could affect the type selection. Jamie said that the event would be an opportunity to close the type-selection loop and share the survey results.

Bob requested that a special letter of invitation be issued to city councils and he suggested that the August 8 decision deadline be made obvious at the event.

Scott asked whether there would be an opportunity to review any updated renderings as they emerge. Larry Fox said that fairly simplistic 2D line drawings of the plan and elevation views have

been produced with more detail are being refined for public presentation. Scott asked whether other viewpoints were available. Jamie offered to send out a link to the recent public survey and the sample renderings it includes.

Tim asked about renderings from the Knickerbocker Bridge and Judkins Point. Larry said that they would be creating more images with design elements in 3D after a type is chosen.

Trevor asked whether the types would show potential adornments. Larry said that they would not. He said that it was important at this phase to select a bridge based on overall shape and how it fits within the site; the adornment discussion will follow the type selection. He noted that there are some limitations about what adornments can be used, though none of the types specifically preclude any particular type of adornment. Jamie explained that Lynn Iaquina was gathering images of design elements to present different examples of what is possible. The display would include images of previous projects and give people the option to make their own suggestions.

Scott described the bridge types as similar to charismatic or uncharismatic people. Uncharismatic types fall through, though they may be equally good people. Jamie noted that Charlotte had raised the challenge of presenting above-deck options. Jamie reiterated the difficulty inherent in adding non-structural enhancements to the types while still presenting an apples to apples comparison.

Larry Fox noted that most of the potential adornments to the structure would not be readily visible to most users passing through and he noted the challenge of deciding which design elements should be included. Scott suggested that color was also an important consideration. Larry Gescher agreed that there were a variety of coloration options as well as the possibility for staining and colored concrete. Jamie reminded the committee of the “graceful,” “distinctive,” and “memorable” keywords as reported by the survey. She explained that the team would need to describe how each type could satisfy those descriptors.

Ann reiterated the need for a notice about the August 8 type selection deadline. Trevor suggested including a timeline. Jamie said that the timeline from the recent newsletter would be available.

Jamie said that it would be helpful to have CAG members available at the welcome station and at the viewpoints in order to share information about the CAG discussions. Jamie requested that the CAG email her if they are available to attend.

Kalin briefly noted the final two questions from the weighting survey. Seven respondents said that cost would not be a significant factor in their type selection decision so long as the project was within budget. Six respondents indicated that a cost-effective solution was important to the project regardless of budget. Respondents were also asked to comment on how much weight to give the survey results. While all respondents considered the survey results important, most felt that the survey was only one of many important decision making tools.

NEXT CAG MEETING

- August 5, 2008, Eugene Public Library - Singer Room.

CLOSE