

Community Task Force (CTF)

MEETING NOTES

January 19, 2009
5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
OMSI Auditorium

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meeting Objectives

- Respond to CTF requests for information.
- Recommend a preferred alternative to the PAG.

Key Points

- The group reached consensus on three recommendations and was evenly divided on a fourth.
- This was the last CTF meeting.

Action Items Completed

- Resignation letter from Gary Barth accepted.
- CTF members reached consensus on Alignment D with a bike/ped signal on the eastside and signalized westside intersection.
- CTF members were evenly divided on the issue of whether to favor a two or three-lane cross-section.
- Two representatives were chosen to report the CTF's findings to the PAG January 26th.

Next Steps

- This is the last CTF Meeting. CTF reports to the PAG at joint meeting, January 26th.

Community Task Force (CTF)

MEETING NOTES

Attendees

CTF Members: Barbara Barber, Jason Barbour, Tom Brown, Marie Dodds, John Fyre, Dorothy Gage, Laura Jackson, Richard Marantz, Robert Mawson, Tina Nunez, Lidwien Rahman, Robert Wilhem, Jr., Brian Wilson and Sharon Wood Wortman.

Staff: Multnomah County: Ian Cannon, Michael Eaton and Mike Pullen; CH2M Hill: Marcy Schwartz and Steve Katko; Cogan Owens Cogan: Elaine Cogan and Ellie Fiore; Portland Office of Transportation: Mauricio LeClerc.

Guests: County Chair, Ted Wheeler; Assistant to County Commissioner Deborah Kafoury R.J. Cervantes, Swati Adarkar, Tony Altucher, Dan Amundson, Mary Anderson, Paul Anuschat, Duncan Baruch, Barbara Baylor, Brett Baylor, Barbara Beekman, Barbara Bernstein, Tom and Kathy Biornstad, Michel Bolsey, Cherie Bolton, Loulie Brown, David Brown, Bruce Bunkhartsmeier, John Brons, Dick Brenneke, Rick Canfield, Andrew Cohen, Tony Dalmolin, Kathy Diamond, Alan Dobbins, Kevin Downing, Thesea Dunbar, Katie Dunham, Nicole Ehrbue, Deborah Eisenbach-Budner, Roy Ettinger, Matt Farley, Tina Farley, Elizabeth Fleck, Margaret Foster, Noel Franks, Lorraine Fyre, Megan Galaher, Nigel Gallop, Kathie and Kennedy Ganda, Beth Goralski, Tyler Graf, Tonya Graig, Elizabeth Grossman, Peter Gutman, Keith Hadley, Pat Hainley, Janis Hainley, Chris Heaps, Bradley Heintz, Sonja Heintz, Lydio Herndon, Allen Herndon, Jonce Ho, John Holmes, Kathleen Holohan, Jake Hopkins, Tom Huckabee, Ben Johnson, Lauren Johnson, Arlene Kavlock, Beth Funsch Kackes, Ute Kangibah, Sarah Kelly, Mary King, Robin Kinnaird, Heather Koch, Randy Koch, Peter Koonce, Philip Kraio, Marcia Lattig, John Lattig, Barnnon Lamp, Kathryn and Jim Larpenteur, Caroline Lehmkuhl, Nick Leonard, Matt Mahoney, Scott Mather, Michelle McCann, Jerry McCann, Shawn Meier, Vince Melon, Greg Meyer, Eric Miller, Ed Murphy, David Noble, Cehrie Nomura, Fred Nomura, Anna Notti, Pamela Orser, Wade Padgett, Kim Padgett, Teresa Pechette, Alee Poth, Jennifer Price, Bob and Judy Ramsoon, Diana Richardson, Kris Rose, Dorie Roth, David and Dana Lowe Rustad, Erin and Geno Salimena, Dick Samuels, Fran Shaw, Barbara Sloop, Kenan Smith, C. Snyder, Catherin Stimac, Teresa Toner, Erik Tonkin, Brent Usher, Max Vega, Justin Vincent, Scott Waxra, Allen Wichser, Susan Wilch, Sehi Williams, Josh Winicki, Stacey Wion, Glen Zimmerman.

Welcome and Introductions

Elaine Cogan opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda. She noted that this is the last CTF meeting. This group of volunteer citizens that has worked together for two and a half years will make its recommendation for a preferred alternative for the PAG to consider.

Public Comments

Eric Miller, co-founder of the Sellwood Playgroup Association, is concerned about protecting community gathering areas in the park. He asked other meeting attendees opposed to alignment E to stand up and presented a petition with 589 signatures opposing Alternative E due to impacts to the park. He asked the CTF and the County not to belabor its decisions. There will be a community march on January 31st in support of protecting the Sellwood neighborhood.

Pat Hainley is the SMILE treasurer and a Sellwood resident. He said many residents oppose the two-lane E option discussed at the last meeting. The SMILE Board met yesterday and expressed its unanimous support for Alternative D.

Eric Tonkin, a small business owner in Sellwood, supports Alignment D. He believes what is good for the neighborhood will also benefit small businesses.

Lauren Johnson lives on SE Miller Street near the Sellwood pool. She is concerned about how the proposed underpass at Grand Avenue will divert traffic into the neighborhood and endanger neighborhood residents. She asked the CTF members to eliminate the loop treatment from consideration.

Kathryn Larpenteur, Sellwood resident, said that Alternative D would impact her home next to the Sellwood Bridge. She has spent many years working to improve neighborhood safety. She hopes the CTF votes to maintain neighborhood quality and preserve river access by choosing a two-lane bridge on Alignment E.

Deborah Eisenbeck-Budner is a Sellwood resident with young children who hopes to live in the neighborhood for a long time. She urged CTF members to preserve the neighborhood character.

Jim Larpenteur supports a narrow Alternative E. He does not want to move. His home would be affected by Alternative D. He does not support phased construction that could have long-term impacts on the community. If there is no financing plan set in the short term, he would like the County to commit to the no-build alternative.

Diana Richardson advocated for a skinny Alternative D and opposes the east-side loop.

Scott Mather is a Sellwood resident with concerns that the curved Alternative E could be more dangerous than a straight alignment.

Lorraine Fyre, a Sellwood resident for 34 years, said that revenue raised by the Oaks Pioneer Church supports many community events and amenities that have positive effects on the neighborhood. She supports a skinny Alternative D to keep the church and revenue source intact.

Dick Bernekke does not understand why a wide bridge is being discussed as neighbors are strongly opposed to this.

Barbara Bernstein, a Sellwood resident and park user, said she represents the interests of dog walkers. The park is an important community asset. She supports a skinny Alternative D.

Randy Koch is a Sellwood resident and bridge commuter who walks and bikes as well as the father of a four-year old boy. He said Alternative E would damage those things that make Sellwood a great community and urged the CTF members to protect community parks and trails and access to them.

Michelle McCann is a Sellwood resident who uses the river recreationally. She has heard some people compare the potential impact to Sellwood Park to Cathedral Park (under the St. John's Bridge) and said that children do not use Cathedral Park. She supports a skinny Alternative D.

Bradley Heintz explained that he was here to speak for Linda Witsal, the apartment manager for Sellwood Court Apartments which are very close to the proposed E alignment. He said the residents are not aware of the proposed alignment.

Kenan Smith and Peter Gutman are Sellwood residents who oppose Alternative E because of their children's safety.

Jerry McCann is a resident of Sellwood who opposes Alternative E.

Swati Adarkar said that decision-makers have a responsibility to consider the broader community in addition to Sellwood. Residents of many neighborhoods use the park and would like to see it protected.

Michelle McCann said she represents Sellwood homeowners and produced illustrations of potential impacts of Alternative E on the neighborhood. She noted that Alternative E would demolish a building with businesses and affect the park and also could impact the church, while Alternative D would have only partial impacts to the condos south of the bridge.

Tony Dalmolin is a Sellwood area resident who said he was not aware of any "skinny" options still under consideration. He asked CTF members to consider cut-through traffic in the neighborhood. There are already problems with speeding.

John Lattig supports a narrow two-lane bridge on E alignment because he feels Alternative D could have unintended consequences. For example, he said, Alternative D could be converted to a three or four-lane bridge in the future. There are no findings on the real impacts of Alternative E on the church and only a one decibel difference for noise between the two alternatives. The DEIS also found no serious visual impacts for the church site under E and says there will be no noise or visual impact to park. A skinny

Alternative E will not go over park. Mr. Lattig supports a two-lane bridge to best protect aquatic resources and the Tacoma Main Street Plan.

David Noble supports either Alternative D or E if access to Riverview Cemetery from Hwy. 43 is maintained. He said he does not understand the logic of putting a new bridge in the same place considering there is unstable ground at the bridge's west end.

John Holmes lives in Sellwood Harbor. Although his unit is not directly under the bridge, he is concerned about aesthetic impacts to all 38 units from removing four units. He supports Alternative E or a no-build alternative.

Ed Murphy is a Sellwood resident who supports David Noble and his concerns about west side soil stability. Of the alternatives studied, including Alternative E, the DEIS states that Alternative D would have the most impacts from slides.

Barbara Sloop is a Sellwood Harbor resident who does not want to move and does not want the bridge to change. She noted that office space can be replaced in other parts of Sellwood. She supports a two-lane Alternative E.

Kathleen Holohan is a Sellwood Harbor resident who would be displaced if the bridge were extended to the south (Alternative D). She would like to preserve the neighborhoods with a two-lane bridge option and supports Alternative E or a narrow D that does not affect the condos.

Chris Heaps supports Alternative D and opposes Alternative E. He asked CTF members to put the needs of the community first over those of individuals.

Robin Kinnaird is a Sellwood resident who asked CTF members to protect the neighborhood and the Tacoma Main Street plan. He favors Alternative D with two to three lanes.

Sellwood resident Theresa Koon favors a skinny Alternative D. She supports the earlier work on the Tacoma Main Street Plan and efforts to improve north/south connectivity.

Elizabeth Grossman is a Sellwood resident who works in her home. She favors Alternative D with a narrow cross-section. She asked that CTF members consider additional environmental and health impacts such as particulate air pollutants and respiratory health. She can provide references such as scientific papers for anyone interested.

Loulie Brown favors Alignment D. She does not support using public funds on a bridge that may denigrate Sellwood Park and the Springwater Corridor.

Alan Dobbins is a Sellwood Harbor resident who would be willing to move from Sellwood Harbor to another facility but probably cannot until the bridge situation has been resolved.

Danny Thomas supports Alternative D.

Letter from CTF member, Gary Barth

Mike Pullen reported that Gary Barth has resigned from the CTF. He originally represented Clackamas County as an employee who commuted daily over the Sellwood Bridge. In December 2006, he ceased commuting but continued to represent those views on the CTF. He now has a public policy position with Clackamas County. He decided to extract himself from the recommendation process and defer to others. The PAG has several Clackamas County representatives. (Gary's letter is attached).

Response to CTF requests for information

In response to requests from the CTF, staff prepared a matrix comparing the remaining options. Two cross-sections remain on the table, including a two-lane, 64-foot cross-section and the three-lane, 76-foot option. The eastside connection and alignment also are undecided. Marcy briefly reviewed the matrix.

Cross-sections

- Three lanes are more costly than two-lane.
- Two-lane options have fewer biological impacts.
- Both are consistent with the Tacoma Main Street Plan. The two-lane cross-section provides the minimum space for emergency access and maintenance. The three-lane option has more flexibility and allows for improved emergency and maintenance operations.

Note: In the following summary, comments from the CTF are in *italics*; comments from staff and others are in regular type.

Lidwein Rahman: It seems as though there is only a small segment of the bridge that is actually 64 or 76 feet.

About 400 feet of bridge would be a narrow width. The rest of the bridge length is wider due to treatments at each end.

Richard: Are you certain that extra 12 feet does not impact additional condos?

Yes. Only four units would be removed from Sellwood Harbor.

Eastside Connection

- The bike/ped signal costs approximately \$500,000 while the Grand Avenue extension would be about \$4 million.
- More biological impacts are associated with the Grand Avenue extension.
- The bike/ped signal provides a protected crossing while the extension (or loop) provides unsignalized bike/ped crossing.
- The loop provides reduces the need for left turns at SE 6th.

- The bike/ped signal minimizes cut-through traffic while the Grand Avenue extension increases these opportunities.
- Bike/ped light may slightly impact the west side interchange and traffic, while the loop should not.
- No right-of-way will be acquired for the bike/ped signal. About 0.1 acre would be needed for the loop.

Tina Nunez: What about events in the park? With a bike/ped signal, could traffic be directed and/or managed?

The bike/ped signal is not a full signal and would not be used to manage vehicle traffic.

Richard Marantz: The public has raised security issues associated with the loop, but the benefit of the loop would be to facilitate traffic leaving the park during events. Is there any additional data on this potential trade-off?

No. This is not considered part of the daily traffic activities.

Alignment Choice

- Total costs are very similar for E and D.
- There are no significant differences in regard to biological impacts.
- More of Alternative D is in the slide area.
- Alternative D would remove four Sellwood Harbor units without damaging others.
- Hardship right-of-way acquisition is the same under both alternatives. It does not apply to units that would remain after construction.
- The same park acreage would be impacted, however, each alignment affects a different park.
- Noise and visual impacts are greater for Alternative E.
- There is a greater annual property tax loss for Alternative E.
- Alternative E would require a greater volume of rock cut, as shown in the handout provided by CH2M Hill.
- Alternative E requires full funding, but Alternative D could be built in phases if funding is limited.

CTF Discussion

CTF members took a straw poll of their preferences on the three issues discussed above as well as the westside connection.

All members agreed that the west end should have a signalized intersection.

Most CTF members favored a bike/ped signal on the eastside. Three favored the Grand Ave Extension.

John Fyre: Some of these objections to the loop have to do with cut-through traffic. The City can address this through mitigation after the fact.

Mauricio LeClerc from PDOT explained that the Bureau of Transportation can mitigate traffic for special events. The bike/ped signal would reduce regular, daily cut-through traffic.

John: Cut-through traffic has to be addressed. We should consider it now while we are talking about the eastside treatment.

Brian Wilson: The public comments made it sound like the neighborhood is already dealing with cut-through and other traffic problems.

John: The loop seems worse, even with some mitigation.

Barbara Boxer: I was undecided for a long time on the loop. It seems like an accommodation for the parks but at the expense of eastside residents.

Lidwein: I agree with Barbara. The signal at 13th is slow if you are going north and people will cut through at peak. I do not want to see more traffic on Spokane.

Robert Mawson: I've heard a lot about the nuisance factor of the loop and am sympathetic. The loop will not alleviate cut-through during events and will add to it during regular peak hours.

Scott Thayer: The loop adds cost to the project and impacts Grand pretty significantly.

In regard to the next item, CTF members were nearly evenly divided between the two and three lane cross-sections.

Brian: I support a three-lane configuration because we are planning for 75 or more years. We should look to the future and plan for flexibility with a wider cross-section.

Laura Jackson: I also favor three lanes for future flexibility and also to have a queuing lane when needed for special events in park.

Marie Dodds: I prefer three lanes for better safety and maintenance.

Lidwein: A wider cross-section provides more flexibility if the streetcar comes across in the future.

John: The problem with a two-lane configuration is that there is no way to unload it. I see no option except three lanes.

Steve: The bridge would operate much like it does today, including some back-up.

Barbara: Two extra lanes only go so far along the bridge, so the third lane seems like gratuitous asphalt. Will it really move traffic better?

When you get to SE 6th, the bridge will move one lane in each direction. Striping is illustrative but the turn lane could extend further west. The function is basically two through lanes for both cross-sections.

Scott: So it's true that both options essentially function identically?

Yes. Two east-bound lanes merge into one with a left turn lane at SE 6th. The bridge can have a three-lane width its entire length to add some flexibility for bikes, pedestrians and transit, but traffic will continue to be controlled by the intersection at SE 6th and Tacoma.

Richard: Is there some way that an under-loop can be used as extra lane for exiting traffic to the right? Can there be a right-turn pocket instead of a left turn center lane?

The bridge has to match Tacoma Street past SE 6th.

Richard: I would like to have a two-lane bridge if possible and use the shoulders for maintenance. We should reduce the use of extra concrete if possible.

Lidwein: We have to have a third lane to line up with SE Tacoma. Have to match cross-section by having a center lane.

Barbara: I object to the idea of putting the loop in to facilitate making special events at the park accessible by car. If the issue is moving traffic off the bridge, make the turn lane longer. The loop seems like too much construction and concrete for the benefit it brings. The cut-through traffic will hurt the neighborhood on a daily basis.

Jason: I weighed in supporting the wider cross-section because there is already a two-lane bridge there and I would like an option that would support the streetcar. My concern is that more lanes and more striping can allow for different configurations that could damage the neighborhood in the future by adding an additional travel lane. I prefer a two-lane cross-section as a better fit for the neighborhood.

The next discussion was on the alignment. In the straw poll, Alternative D received more votes.

Tom Brown: I chose E because it is the only alignment that can be built without a bridge closure. I don't see how the interchange can be re-built in the existing location (D) without some closure. Closing the bridge impacts the whole city. Fears of impacts to the park are over-blown. I represent small businesses in the Sellwood/Westmoreland area. The potential of a bridge closure is already slowing business. I voted for E for that reason but agree that we don't need to impact condo owners.

There is some concern that westside construction could cause closure. Short-term closure could happen for either interchange. It would be difficult to say which would be more likely. The staff feels like we can safely build the bridge while traffic continues under either alternative.

Tina: I have worked on many bridge permits and have never seen a bridge closure where one was not planned. I am in support of the D alignment because of neighborhood association and neighbors favor the current alignment. Also, most survey respondents favored D alignment.

Jason: I voted for E but feel neither is a great choice.

CTF members agreed to express their preferences once again on the three elements.

After further discussion, the group reached a consensus favoring Alternative D and the bike/ped signal on the eastside. CTF members agreed they were evenly divided on the cross-section.

Additional Issues

Elaine passed out handouts with a list of responses from CTF members when asked at their first meeting on June 26, 2006 to finish the statement “At the end of this project, I will be satisfied if....”

CTF members offered some current observations.

At the end of this project, I:

- Feel like I have more grey hair.
- Hope that the bridge gets built sooner rather than later.
- Hope that soon we can all ride, bike or walk over the bridge.
- Hope that we find funding for this really soon.

Tom: I propose that in the short term we improve the safety of the existing bridge by removing light poles on the sidewalk. Put them up on guard rail to make extra space on the bridge.

Barbara: If D alignment happens and this thing moves forward, as a CTF member, I believe hardship money should be a priority. Don't hold the condo residents hostage. Resolve the issue soon.

Next, the group chose Laura Jackson and Brian Wilson to represent the CTF at the joint meeting with the PAG on January 26th.

The group suggested these talking points for the PAG presentation.

- Find funding soon
- Improve the safety of existing bridge by moving the lights off the sidewalk
- Don't hold Sellwood condominium residents hostage – use the hardship right-of-way acquisition process
- Our selection of the D alignment was not driven by phasing. We want the entire project built at one time, as soon as possible
- A three-lane bridge represents “camel's nose under the tent”

- We support the Tacoma Main Street plan

Richard: When does the bridge type get decided?

After the record of decision. The County would like public involvement around that issue as well.

Ian Cannon: We have been together for over two years. We really appreciate how well you've worked together and that you stuck with it for a long time. You are great community representatives.

Ted Wheeler, Chair of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners thanked CTF members for their over two years of service on the project. He said that there are no easy solutions and controversial answers. This group represents the best of what the community has to offer. You have been compassionate and considerate and have helped the PAG tremendously. Your analysis and thoughtfulness far exceeds our expectations. The lack of consensus on the cross-section is an important point in its own. He added that he is personally committed to seeing this project get built. Everyone agrees on the need to fund and finish the project.

Chair Wheeler presented each CTF member with a certificate of appreciation. The group enjoyed cake and sparkling cider.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Letter of Resignation From Gary Barth

Mike

I wanted to advise you that I am vacating my position of the Sellwood Bridge Community Task Force. As you recall, I was initially recruited as a CTF member because I was a Clackamas County resident who commuted across the bridge for employment. My input to-date as a member of the CTF has been reflective of that “former” orientation and I think I have adequately represented those views in prior meetings. However, it was my former orientation as six months into the process, in December 2006, I joined Clackamas County as Deputy Director of Business and Community Services. For the first time in 20 years I no longer had to commute downtown or to the Westside for my work.

At the request of staff I was happy to continue serving on the CTF to offer the perspective of the commuting public and the critical role that the Sellwood Bridge plays in our regional transportation system. However, it has been a balancing act, offering my personal observations as a former commuter with that of public policy direction that influences my current position.

Now that we are entering in the final recommendation phase I think it is appropriate that I extract myself from the process at this time and defer to the other members of the CTF as they formulate and forward their final CTF recommendations to the Policy Advisory Group. The PAG includes Clackamas County Board of Commissioners Chair Lynn Peterson and Cam Gilmore, our Director of the Department of Transportation and Development for Clackamas County has been engaged with Multnomah County staff on the technical aspects of the project so Clackamas County is well represented without my involvement.

I appreciate the opportunity to have served in this critical project and greatly enjoyed working with an exceptional group of people on the CTF as well as the outstanding staff at Multnomah County and your entire project team. It has clearly been a thoughtful, deliberative and extensive review and I am confident that the necessary information and public input is now available to provide clear direction on the future of the Sellwood Bridge to best benefit the multitude of current and future users and uses.

Best Regards

Gary

[Gary Barth](#)

Deputy Director | Business & Community Services
Clackamas County