



Community Task Force (CTF)

MEETING NOTES

December 3, 2007

5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

SMILE Station

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Meeting Objectives

- Receive updates on public involvement activities
- Review Bridge Type Working Group (BTWG) recommendations.
- Agree on bridge types to be forwarded to the Policy Advisory Group (PAG).

Key Points

- County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey sent an email to PAG members regarding the CTF's concerns.
- The CTF recommended six bridge types to be studied in the EIS, upon approval/modification by the PAG.

Action Items Completed

- The CTF made recommendations to the PAG on bridge types for each alternative.

Action Items

- No action items. The CTF will meet again in the spring of 2008 following the publication of the draft EIS.

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MEETING NOTES

Attendees

CTF Members: Barbara Barber, Bill Dickey, John Fyre, Dorothy Gage, Laura Jackson, Richard Marantz, Tina Nunez, , Scott Thayer, Robert Wilhelm, and Sharon Wood Wortman.

Staff: Multnomah County: Ian Cannon, Michael Eaton, Mike Lynch, David Martinez and Mike Pullen; CH2M Hill: Lwin Hwee, Steve Kotka and Marcy Schwartz; Cogan Owens Cogan: Elaine Cogan and Ellie Fiore; Jeanne Lawson and Associates: Alex Cousins.

Guests: Doug Allen, Sandy Hubbard, Arlene Kavlok, Bruce Johnson, Diana Richardson, Lynn Rogers, Dick Springer and Tom Walsh.

Welcome and Introductions

Elaine Cogan opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda.

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

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Staff Update

During the November 12th CTF meeting with County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey, CTF members requested closer communication with PAG. Commissioner Rojo de Steffey told staff she will address it at the December 10th PAG. CTF members are welcome to attend in addition to the two CTF members who will present the CTF's bridge type recommendations.

Report on Refinements to Alternatives

Steve Katko of CH2MHill explained updated bridge alternatives that will be studied in the EIS. These are still preliminary, awaiting additional engineering analysis. They are as follows.

Alternative A (rehabilitation) would be aligned on the existing bridge's center lane with a 39-foot cross-section and a separate bike/ped bridge. There would be access to Staff Jennings from an underpass under the roundabout. ODOT and the County are still considering specific access points. Relocation of the Macadam Bay Yacht Club may be necessary. There will be four lanes on the west end of the bridge approaching the roundabout.

Richard Marantz: Can this bridge and intersection accommodate large vehicles such as those that would access Staff Jennings?

They are designed to accommodate large vehicles and trailers.

Robert Wilhelm: Would this design eliminate parking under the bridge on the west side?

Parking would stay in same general location.

This design includes a stop control on SE Sixth Avenue. In regard to the roundabout, consulting engineers and County staff are talking with Tri-Met about the location of transit stops.

Steve continued. Alternative B (rehabilitation) would have a 57-foot cross-section with bikes and pedestrians on the bridge. It has the same east side treatment as Alternative A. In this alternative, bikes and pedestrians travel through the unsignalized roundabout. There are concerns about pedestrian safety in the roundabout. Access points are the same as Alternative A. This bridge also would have four lanes on the west end.

Richard: How is it possible to get four lanes of traffic on a rehabilitation bridge? We were told it couldn't happen.

The County has hired a new consulting firm to identify creative solutions for more bridge capacity. The bridge approaches will get replaced in both rehabilitation options. More trusses and/or extra construction may be necessary.

Richard: I thought bridge rehabilitation was supposed to be a low-cost alternative.

This is not determined at this point.

Alternative C is a replacement bridge with a lower deck and three lanes of vehicular traffic on the 45-foot cross-section. The west side interchange is a trumpet design, which requires more land relative to other intersection designs. The trumpet interchange would impact the cemetery hillside and require the removal of Staff Jennings. This alternative also eliminates vehicular access to cemetery. Vehicular access to the park is provided from the north. The Yacht Club entrance would be relocated as well. There is a bike/ped connection into the cemetery.

The east side treatment includes a loop and underpass access to SE Grand Avenue. Currently, there is an eastside bike/ped ramp from the lower deck to the Springwater Trail.

Bill Dickey: Can this eastside treatment be evaluated with other alternatives?

Yes, elements of each alternative can be combined. Three versions of the eastside treatments are being studied in the EIS, in part because there public opinion on this issue is mixed.

Alternative D would have a 64-foot cross-section, two lanes of vehicular traffic, bike lanes and shared sidewalks. There is a signalized intersection at the west end with bike/ped ramps from both the north and south sides of the bridge. There also is a signalized intersection at SE Tacoma and 6th Avenue. This alternative includes a staged bridge construction.

Bill: Do any alternatives include a temporary bridge?

Alternative B includes a temporary detour bridge. Traffic would need to be detoured for approximately three years without a temporary bridge. Alternative C also could include a temporary bridge, though it is being studied with Alternative B.

Barbara Barber: Does this cross-section have two vehicle lanes with five on the west end?

The number of lanes is influenced by the interchange type. The trumpet and roundabout require four lanes, while the signalized option needs five.

Richard: Are we proposing two lanes going south in this alternative?

Yes, due to a short signal phase. Northbound traffic is free-flowing, requiring fewer lanes.

Alternative E represents the pink-teal hybrid alignment. It would impact the Staff Jennings boat storage yard, but not force removal of the building. Only one west side bike/ped loop ramp can be provided on the north end of the bridge. This alternative includes a signalized intersection on the west side and has more impacts to the hillside and underlying bedrock than the others. The east end intersection is signalized.

Public Involvement Update

An open house at Oaks Park to gather public opinion was held recently. There was a very strong preference for the delta frame as the moderate priced option. Preferences among the four high-priced options were not as clear. The through arch and deck arch were somewhat preferred.

This was the lowest turnout by far for any open house. Many attendees seemed less interested in bridge type and wanted to discuss alignments and cross-sections. There also was some interest in funding and the EIS process. The proportion of attendees from the Sellwood neighborhood was comparable to the other public events.

At the open house, the most popular bridge types for each alternative were:

Alternative A (bike/ped bridge): suspension

Alternative C (double deck): through arch

Alternative D (phased construction): delta frame

Alternative E: delta frame (moderately priced) and through arch (higher priced).

Tina Nunez: I am surprised the cable-stayed option is not more popular.

It is more popular with the BTWG. Cost may be a factor. Open house participants were more focused on the project itself rather than the bridge's appearance. Some people had concerns about the visual impacts of a cable-stayed bridge. The cost of maintenance also was an issue.

Richard: Was there discussion about the appearance of the streetscape versus the bridge itself?

There were some comments about this. Staff were very careful to explain that these are bridge types, not designs.

Sixty-nine people attended the open house; 53 written comments were received.

The third online survey was also just completed. It had been up on the website for about a month; 1,615 responses were received. The first survey tallied about 1,800 responses, the second about 3,000. The distribution by zip code was comparable in all three.

When asked what bridge attribute was most important, the most popular response is life-long utility and durability. Flexibility to accommodate current and future uses also are highly ranked. Distinctive character and aesthetics is least important.

Among moderate-priced bridges, the delta frame is consistently preferred over the box girder by a ratio of about 2:1. The deck arch is the most popular of the higher-priced options.

The survey did not include the stress ribbon or suspension bridge types for the bike/ped bridge. Of the choices included in the survey, cable-stayed is the most popular. All types were fairly evenly ranked.

There is no clear preference of types for Alternative C. The delta frame is preferred for Alternative D. The most popular options for Alternative E are the delta frame and deck arch.

Themes from the open-ended responses include choose an inexpensive design and plan to meet future needs.

Tina: Are we voting for a type for each alternative tonight?

Yes, CTF members will choose bridge types for each of the five alternatives.

Bridge Type Discussion

The BTWG had its last meeting last week to finalize the bridge type recommendations for each alternative. The BTWG considered additional attributes including “lightness of touch”, distinctive character, and visual independence and elegance for the bike/ped bridge. Generally the BTWG members placed more emphasis on design than the public.

Richard: Please define “lightness of touch”.

Scott Thayer: Design elegance is the best synonym, but it is difficult to define.

Sharon Wood Wortman: It is a subjective criterion.

Scott: The concept isn't firm. Paddy Tillett, a BTWG member, conceived of the term “lightness of touch”. Bridges that score high on this measure are not clunky or bulky.

Lwin Hwee presented a review of the bridge types with additional examples of bridge designs for each.

Bill: Is bridge height a mandatory requirement?

There is a navigational clearance requirement, which is currently 75 feet. There is a public process for determining river clearance requirements. The cruise ship industry does not want the navigational clearance to be reduced. The Coast Guard also supports the existing clearance requirements.

Robert: What is the reason for the double piers in one of the box girder examples?

The design, with two thinner piers rather than a single column, adds a visual dimension and supports the span. It is mostly an aesthetic decision.

Bill: what does the word “extradosed” mean?

It refers to the exposed (external) cables. In other bridge types, the cables are hidden. The term is from the Latin: External (extra) back (dose).

Richard: Are there functional advantages to the extradosed?

There are disadvantages with exposed cables. The surface of a box girder offers more flexibility. There are very few extradosed bridges in the world.

The length of the Sellwood span will influence the appearance of the bridge type, including the proportion of bridge elements. A thinner deck is usually possible with a superstructure.

BTWG member Bruce Johnson from ODOT commented at the meeting that Oregon has many arch bridges.

There was some desire among group members to advance a variety of types for study in the EIS. The BTWG recommended each bridge type except the extradosed.

Alternative A (bike/ped)

Moderate price:	Stress ribbon
Higher priced:	Suspension

As Alternative B is a rehabilitation option, there is no bridge type choice.

Bill: Wouldn't the rehabilitated bridge look different from the existing bridge if it is to accommodate the five lanes?

Yes, but the underlying bridge type will not change.

Alternative C: Higher priced (only): Cable-stayed. The group felt that this design would be most elegant with a narrow bridge.

Alternative D (moderate price): Delta frame. The only choice for the higher-priced bridge type is the deck arch.

Alternative E (moderate price): box girder and (higher price) through arch.

The BTWG suggests the box girder could result in a somewhat lighter design for Alternative E's wide cross-section. The box girder also is the least expensive type. Delta frame bridges can appear heavy or clunky from certain angles.

Sharon: The triangle in the delta frame can be considered a reference to the existing Sellwood truss structure.

Richard: What determines the number of piers? Is there an advantage to reducing the piers?

Each bridge type rendering shows two piers in the river.

Richard: Would three piers reduce the cost?

Fewer piers in the water are preferred by resource agencies. The number of piers is not likely to significantly affect the schedule or cost.

Scott reported that BTWG member Paddy Tillett, who could not attend the meeting, encouraged the CTF to choose an “aspirational” bridge type among the more expensive options.

Bill: Why is there no moderate-price option on C?

None of the moderately-priced options can accommodate the double-deck and still meet navigational clearance requirements.

Richard: Is the deck arch really comparable to other high-priced types?

It is the least expensive of the higher-priced bridges.

Bill: Does the bridge type really need to be studied if bridge elements can be mixed?

Yes, we need to study the types, although they can be matched with different alternatives after the EIS is completed. The PAG may also modify the CTF recommendations or make their own.

Tina: Which of the box girder and delta frame would be visually lighter for Alternative E when viewed from the park?

The delta frame’s deck has a consistent width and can be somewhat lighter than the box girder deck, which tends to be deeper. Alternative E is the widest alignment. The delta frame could be designed with some transparency.

Richard: I suggest eliminating the cable-stayed in favor of through-arch for Alternative C and only studying one superstructure.

The public is in favor of deck arch. Most of BTWG members are sympathetic to deck arch as an option for Alternative E.

Sharon: The difference between the deck arch and through arch are in how you view the bridge. The deck arch’s key features are viewed from under the bridge; the through arch’s super structure would be visible from Tacoma Street.

Tina: I support including cable-stayed for at least one alternative.

The online survey scores for superstructure bridges are about even. The open house results clearly favor the through arch.

The CTF voted to substitute the through arch for cable stayed for Alternative C. The vote passed with nine votes in favor and one opposed.

The CTF voted to support the BTWG's recommendation of the delta frame as the moderately-priced option for Alternative D. There were eight votes in favor and two opposed.

Robert: I think the box girder with some relief is an acceptable low-cost option.

Laura: The public preference for the delta frame is overwhelming, but the box girder is perfectly acceptable for the lowest price option.

Sharon: What is the cost differential between these two?

It is impossible to know with any accuracy. The delta frame is generally regarded as a slightly more expensive type.

Robert: It may be a good idea to study many different bridge types. I propose substituting the deck arch for higher-cost option for Alternative E. The curved alignment would seem to flow better as a deck arch, and this is a lower-cost option.

The CTF voted seven to one in favor of the box girder for Alternative E

John Fyre: I am trying to rely on public opinion. We should honor their preferences.

The public favored the deck arch and cable-stayed types for Alternative E.

Sharon: We could change Alternative E to cable-stayed.

The cable-stayed is likely to look better on Alternative C because its alignment is narrower.

Scott: I would like to find a balance between recommending too many and too few options. I advocate the through arch for Alternative C.

Barbara: Can we accept the BTWG recommendations as whole?

Scott: I think those recommendations include too many options.

Barbara: I would love to see a cable-stayed bridge, but skeptical that it will be built because of higher construction and maintenance costs.

Laura: I agree with Barbara. An asymmetrical cable-stayed bridge is not likely. At the last PAG meeting I attended, the PAG seemed to support a signature bike/ped bridge and an inexpensive vehicle bridge. I predict that is what they will select.

Alex: The cable-stayed is one of two bridge types being considered for the new light rail bridge over the Willamette

The CTF voted again on which type to recommend for Alternative C. Two members supported cable-stayed and eight voted against it. Seven CTF members supported the through-arch.

Next, the CTF voted on Alternative E. Eight members supported the through arch, one supported the deck arch and there were no votes for cable-stayed.

The online survey did not have stress ribbon or suspension as options for the pedestrian bridge, which were the two recommendations of the BTWG. Cable-stayed is preferred among the options presented. Open house participants favor a suspension bridge.

The CTF voted in favor of the stress ribbon for the moderate-cost bike/ped bridge type with nine votes.

Barbara: How expensive would a suspension bike/ped bridge be?

It is difficult to say. It would be a narrow but long bridge.

Tina: Which of cable-stayed and suspension would have a smaller footprint/less impact on the ground?

A suspension bridge has to have anchorage/structure on each end. Cable-stayed bridges anchor into themselves and typically have smaller footings.

Richard: Why did the BTWG choose a suspension option?

They were trying to get as many alternatives on the list.

The CTF next voted on the bike/ped bridge type. Four favored suspension, five cable-stayed and none through arch.

The final CTF recommendations to the PAG are as follows:

Alternative	Moderate-Priced	Higher-Priced
A (bike/ped only)	Stress ribbon	Cable-stayed
C		Through arch
D	Delta frame	Deck arch
E	Box girder	Through arch

In a secret ballot, Scott and Laura were chosen to represent the CTF at the the December 10th PAG meeting to explain their bridge type recommendations.

Next Steps

The CTF has completed all the steps necessary before the EIS begins and will take a hiatus while the technical reports are prepared. CTF members will be kept up to date during this time. CTF and public meetings will start up again after spring 2008 with the goal of choosing a preferred alternative. Metro, Multnomah County and the Federal

Highway Administration (FHWA) need to approve the decision. There will likely be three more CTF meetings, including a joint meeting with the PAG.

Richard: Would it be possible to have a recommendation from the staff on the preferred alternative?

Some projects do include staff reports or joint recommendations. In this case, staff have decided not to express opinions.

Richard: The process may be more transparent if staff opinions were shared.

The staff and CTF work together. Staff have often made proposals for CTF members to respond to. We think this is the proper approach.

Laura: This is a community-driven process. It's great to have staff input to help us understand the technical aspects of the process. I don't see the need to change this and don't want to see staff vote on the preferred alternative.

Robert: There is no reason to change how we are operating.

Bill: This group represents the public at large. The staff hears from the public through this process.

Richard: I would like to know what staff are reporting to their elected officials.

County staff present the CTF's recommendation to Commissioner Rojo de Steffey. PAG members may or may not follow these recommendations. Staff offers CTF recommendation and not their own opinion.

The CTF agreed to continue the process followed so far.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.