

Columbia River **CROSSING** DRAFT Meeting Minutes

MEETING: Stakeholder's Meeting

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, December 16, 2008

ATTENDEES: **Stakeholder Group Members in Attendance**

Lainie Smith	Oregon Department of Transportation
John Gillam	Portland Department of Transportation
Kate Deane	Portland Development Commission
Steve Bates	Redmond Heavy Hauling, CRC FWG, COP FWG
Corky Collier	Columbia Corridor Association
Walter Valenta	Bridgeton Neighborhood Association
Joe Zehnder	Bureau of Planning
Kathryn Williams	Port of Portland
Mary Coolidge	Audubon Society of Portland
Jeff Nudelman	Harsch Investments
Kurt Redd	Diversified Marine
Cheryl Twete	Metropolitan Exposition-Recreation Commission
Jeff Stuhr	Urban Design AG
Emily Gardner	CRC Urban Design Advisory Group
Steve Rupert	Kenton Neighborhood Association
Bob Russell	Oregon Trucking Association
Ken Kirse	TriMet

Others in Attendance

David Knowles	David Evans and Associates
Alex Dupey	David Evans and Associates
Katie King	David Evans and Associates
Marcy McInelly	SERA Architects
Zach Horowitz	Columbia River Crossing
Casey Liles	Columbia River Crossing
Larry Epstein	Diversified Marine
Carla Shown	Diversified Marine
Carley Francis	Columbia River Crossing
Gavin Oien	Columbia River Crossing
Susan Barthel	Bureau of Environmental Services

The meeting began at 9:00 AM and was facilitated by David Knowles and Alex Dupey.

Introduction

- David Knowles welcomed all present to the third Stakeholder's Meeting and provided introductory comments. Each stakeholder introduced themselves and who they represent.

Agenda Amendments

- David noted that Cheryl Twete and Marcy McInelly will give a presentation on the Expo Center Master Plan.
- David explained that the purpose of the day's meeting was to discuss the facts of the evaluation and start honing the choices. Suggestions for changes are welcome so they can be evaluated for the final Stakeholder's meeting in January.

Minutes

- David asked if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of the November Stakeholder's meeting. There were none.

MERC Design Plan

- David cited that one of the major questions for the group is what will happen to the MERC property. This is central in deciding which alignment makes the most sense.
- Cheryl indicated that Marcy of SERA, in conjunction with MERC and Kittelson, have pulled together some early design possibilities for the future of the Expo Center site. Marcy described the principles of the design concepts. Cheryl asked that the group recognize that the plan is in the early stages, and there is much work to be done on it.
- Marcy described the drawings and noted issues but also possibilities with the Vanport wetland. The illustration potentially turns the front of the Expo Center toward the wetlands, to include gardens, plazas etc. to celebrate the wetlands. Pedestrians would ideally be able to connect to the 40 mile loop and to the Smith/Bybee lakes and could have access to the river over the new transit orientation. There are many possibilities for corporate headquarters, hotels, meeting spaces, a ballroom, structured parking (to replace surface parking). Major events that occur in the current parking area would now be on the western edge of the area, with a surface lot there. Coming from the TriMet stop, there are possibilities of creating a park blocks-style promenade.
- David asked if the parking amount had been quantified yet and Marcy responded that no, it hasn't.
- Kathryn asked if the new construction would be on MERC property and asked about the pathways extending south into the wetlands. Cheryl responded that MERC understands that this is Port property, and would definitely work closely with the Port through this process.
- John Gillam asked if access would only be from the access road or from Marine Drive as well. Marcy responded that access exists, as shown, all around the perimeter. Most conservatively, it would be at Force Ave. and Marine Drive. Perimeter roads would provide access to the garages.
- David asked Joe if the Bureau of Planning has been working on this as well. Joe responded that they had, and that principal issues with them also included taking advantage of the natural location (river, wetlands, etc.), making fuller use of the area, taking a look at the local street network, to see what works and what doesn't. These are all important issues.

Alternative Southern Alignment Analysis

- David suggested that the group turn to looking at the draft report. As you read, there's an emerging consensus around the Standard alignment. There are still issues, but we shouldn't conclude right away that we're right back where we've started. There's been more attention to the MERC property, to the street connectivity (# streets and connections, and how they connect), bike and pedestrian connections, access issues for Diversified Marine and Ross Island Sand & Gravel. With that preface, he'd like to hear whether the report captures the current thoughts and perspectives of participants and their organizations.
- Cheryl stated that she hadn't seen the report before today and would like to take more time to do so before she makes comments. David acknowledged that it is short notice as the draft report was sent out on Friday.
- Jeff S. noted that it doesn't seem that all the alternatives have the same amount of attention as the Standard alignment. He would speculate that the interests most involved identify the most with the Standard: that the other alignments didn't have champions and so weren't investigated as thoroughly. He'd like to see this issue addressed in the document. David explained that development opportunities were described for all of the alternatives, but that didn't include specific planning for private property.
- Jeff S. stated that he didn't see the Slough or the Vanport wetlands being an either/or option. If both could be celebrated, that would be great. In the future, we should look at that northern boundary area, and how it can interact with the Slough, maybe through trails. There's also opportunity for the harbor and where the off ramps and roads are placed determine all of this.
- Joe said to pick this up from Jeff, we did look at the 'parcellization' of the different options, and one of the principals of the discussion was that the heart of the MERC property should be as contiguous as possible. Another principle was to keep an eye on what could happen on the waterfront. There's no

reason to give up on the natural location. Near-term, there's the industrial use and what this does to the long term prospects of the area. It's critical for the CRC is to know where the access points are, and what the potential is for the various points. Essentially, we've done some work, but we haven't dug down to design the site yet. Those details will come later. David said that we can do more to document this in the paper or use more precise language. The purpose of this report is to identify issues that can be addressed in the future, to mark what's important for future design.

- Kate indicated that she was a little confused by David's response to Joe—we have one more meeting we're anticipating in January. She asked if David would anticipate between now and then that some concepts would be developed from a land-use perspective that would pull all of this together and see what works best.
- David said no—he felt that this was addressed in the report. We would just add more that there are more possibilities than have been investigated.
- Jeff S. said that to him the critical part is that we leave enough developable land on the waterfront that we can, in the future, make it a more optimal development site, like a hotel or a park. Once we put a road through there, we're stuck for the next 100 years. Joe said that even his group had put it on the table, though hadn't developed it.
- David said on that note, we're passing around the Standard Modified alignment, introduced to me last week. Walter developed this idea and provided this graphic.
- John G. said that when we looked at the different alternatives, we thought there were aspects of each that had merit. We wanted to be respectful of keeping a large, contiguous plot for MERC, but maintain a functional interchange. An alignment that provided more squared interchange design. This moves the interchange a little farther south, but connects up to Marine Drive on the north side, pulling it farther back from the harbor. It is similar to the Expo Center plan described by Marcy, in changing the orientation of the Expo Center toward the wetland; it connects Kenton and Bridgeton; and provides bicycle plans. It is a variation of the Standard that has some additional bonuses.
- Walter noted that he came up with this idea using the plan that MERC drew up. He thought the new orientation for the Expo Center was great. When this process started with CRC, the group thought about it from a transportation perspective. The original Standard alignment was all about minimizing impact, not necessarily making it better. The more we went into it, the more we realized that urban design could holistically help formulate and inform the design of the interchange. I came away thinking that the idea of reorienting MERC was great, as well as the idea of further developing the riverfront. Ultimately, I was hoping this process would help us come up with a compromise, to pull us together.
- David asked Kurt of Diversified how he felt, since it was brought up that he might not be there forever. Kurt noted that Diversified Marine operates on a pretty small piece, and so we're worried that the road would push us out. I do like that the road runs farther south in this new alignment, and gives us more room.
- David asked Casey if the CRC staff was willing to do some analysis on this for grades and curves, and to check out the options. Casey said that we talked about it briefly, and it does seem to compromise well at first look. We'll need to check for fatal flaws, but the operations seem to run in the envelope of where we've already analyzed. The main issue I see is that it's built right over the top of the current interchange, which could be a problem.
- Jeff N. stated that this was a great conversation for me personally. I take things literally, so when I came into it, I was thinking it as how all this area would affect the CRC. In terms of land use vs. transportation, I never understood that the idea was to find more developable land. I didn't know it centered on building new parks and building a new community. We need to not forget that we also need to celebrate business and industry. I'm looking for a little help to better understand how this whole process has turned into finding more developable land—just because we can, doesn't mean we should.
- David explained that whenever we look at a major transportation investment, we look at the land use we already have. The main consideration was the heavy industrial uses further west of the Harsch properties. This discussion has focused more on the closer areas, as all the alternatives help with the trucking further west. There was a feeling from the City of Portland was that not enough attention had been paid to the local areas.

- Jeff S. stated that from a UDAG perspective, in studying the south marine interchanges and the island interchanges the question came up that if we pull back the marine drive interchange, does that make for a better bridge? Can we better develop the area; can there be better connection between Bridgeton and Kenton, etc? There are a lot of interested parties, and since we are going to be putting a lot of money into it regardless, we might as well make it better while we're at it. Can we improve stormwater management; improve access for local business, etc.?
- Lainie said that this new alternative is very interesting me. There is an operational advantage to moving the interchange south. From ODOT's perspective there are other advantages: its perpendicular, has better geometry and better spacing, and is better for trucks. The analysis has focused on the geometry for trucks, but other stuff is important too. This new interchange might 'do it all'...I want ODOT to be part of the conversations between the city and the port and CRC, as we are the ultimate owners of it, and need to live with it for 100 years. We're not privy to many of these, and in the long run, we need to develop an IAMP for this area. The report itself seemed to gloss over the access management issue—the final report should have more info on this. The report focused on the land use, local plans, but there's also the freeway management plan, which is just as much a part of it as well. I also didn't see a discussion of cost?
- Alex: there's actually not much difference, which was cited in a bullet in the text.
- David: there was only a difference of about \$5M, which, in order of magnitude, is nothing.
- Steve: The report seems to be a good start. From a transportation perspective, the standard was the preferred, though it seemed to have intersections with problems. This new design improves both issues that we had—no additional lights, etc. Just looking at the image, it seems to address the only issues we had.
- David: I don't want to make Cheryl pour cold water on this, but there is an impact on the MERC property. I know she hasn't had a chance to look at it yet, but it is important to have the actual property owner give some input.
- Cheryl: we appreciate it. It looks like the LRT station is under the overpass?
- Walter: it can move around 50 ft or so—it's not been finalized. I'm not sure if it has to cross over the station or can go on the side, or what.
- David: what I've advised CRC is that they should treat this as a concept—to approach it from an engineering perspective.
- Cheryl: we've spent a lot of time on how the LRT station access could help the LRT
- Ken: it would be difficult to build over the train. It's not so easy and we'd have to look at the details. If we cut off the north end, it would complicate things. Move it a little north, and it would relieve that.
- David: I'm assuming that you can work with the CRC staff on this?
- Ken: yes.
- Jeff N: what about access to the Harsch Properties.
- Corky: I'd like to hear from the local neighborhood groups, as it's hard for me to understand local street connectivity. I am really happy to see MERC oriented toward the wetland rather than the river. The other direction seemed to cause problems. I am disturbed by some of the discussion and the draft comments in the sense that we were talking about reflecting intense urban design, transportation/industrial being a transitional use. This is an important industrial sanctuary within the UGB—shorter commutes, utilizing an efficient transit system, etc. If you want urban, we have downtown. We try to keep the industrial areas closer to downtown to keep that mix going. The orientation of some of these comments is in a dangerous direction. Its east and west. The MERC site is an anomaly, not the norm. Let's keep it industrial.
- David: to clarify, the 'intensely urban' terminology is directed toward the MERC site only. The rest will remain industrial. The MERC site needs to maintain its urban flavor and possibly become more so.
- Corky: we might want to add in something around about 'reflecting the intensely industrial flavor' of the area.
- Jeff S: I'd like to clarify my comments. By interim, I didn't mean a year or two. As long as it's there, it's there. I just mean that particular MERC area. I don't mean that we should kick anybody out, but keep the door open for when there's a million more people in the area.
- Corky: that's my fear, that if we want to keep our current feeling of the city, we need to keep an industrial area close to downtown.

- Cheryl: I would suggest it read 'a more intense urban use of the land'. I don't think we want it to approach the downtown in urban feeling.
- Steve R: I'd like to express from a neighborhood perspective. I can see that the Southern realignment causes problems, so to look at the central and standard alignment; it's great that this new option has come out today. We don't need to hide industry—we need to show that it happens and is important to Portland. I would also encourage a bike loop—we don't need to look at industrial and livable as mutually exclusive.
- Larry: I'm much more heartened by the discussion today than by the report. In reference to the land use findings, the fifth bullet talks about storage on ODOT property for Diversified Marine. I need to emphasize the importance of the storage site. Unless we have it, we won't be able to celebrate this plan; we can't survive without that storage. I repeat that this is a 10 M industry, with a 1M payroll. If we were to follow the city's ideals of preserving industrial manufacturing facilities, Diversified should remain. The MERC design assumes Diversified would go away. We're disappointed that Ross Island Sand and Gravel hasn't shown up. The three of us around that interchange need to talk to one another. There's been a lot of talk of the 6 second difference for trucks; it's a 5-6 minute difference for us. It has a huge impact on our business. We have been participating in this process, because we believe that the CRC is important. CRC doesn't believe we are important. The same LRT bridge has been there since we first started talking about it in June, and it negatively impacts us. Moving Marine Drive further south would give us more space, more storage. We like the plan introduced today and the Central plan. We DO NOT favor the Standard plan. It should be in the report that there is not unanimity on this.
- David: we have recommended in the plan that CRC spend more time with Diversified Marine in discussions about access, etc.
- John G.: the 5 points at the end of the report; some of them have to do with local streets and network. A lot of the work has been on the major system, and local streets have been glossed over. It would be preferable to have the local street network laid out before taking it to the city council. Also, some of the major street connections have not been studied much. We should spend more time on connections between MLK and Marine Drive and the associated truck traffic. Maybe consider moving it a little further east to save the neighborhoods? The pedestrian-bike network, along with the local street network. At some point, we need an understanding about how much of this pedestrian-bike network is part of the project.
- David: Maybe work with Casey and Lainie on a schedule and list of things that need attention. If the three (including Lainie) of you could come up with this list, then you could have the assurance that it would happen soon, if it's not already completed. Maybe report this back to us when we have our final meeting?
- John: it would be preferable if it were all settled.
- David: These were all parts of the conditions of the LPA.
- Corky: I'm concerned about bicycle access—motor vehicles need space, and I was wondering if the advisory committee had looked at these and made suggestions?
- John: we're looking at tweaks and modifications, but it would be helpful if all the advisory groups could meet and report back. The groups don't need to take action, just review and bring back comments on the acceptability of the report.
- Corky: As people and bikers come into Oregon, they need to say that this awesome, this is straightforward and pleasant.
- Alex: the existing bike/pedestrian routes have been built on suggestions from the PBAC.
- David: the more people that understand the direction of this, the better.
- Kate: To reinforce some of the comments already made. I am very excited by the MERC land-use concept, orienting Expo Center toward the wetlands. I am interested in the Standard Modified proposal, and in CRC's analysis on whether it works and what tweaks might be necessary. Looking at this alternative and hearing from Diversified Marine—I concur with the comments about strengthening the language in the report, and that there be a more robust description of the bike/pedestrian trails. To understand the geometry of some of the roads, the opportunities and constraints of making more efficient connections and interchanges. I'll be interested to see which alignment works the best.

- David: so you want to see more analysis on the bike/pedestrian work, the industrial uses, and the usable property for MERC, can you just let people into the wetland? All this needs to be brought before us for the recommendation in January.
- Kathryn: I assume we'll give this new alignment the same treatment.
- David: our hope is to not do that, and this is why: the alternative is already so similar to the analysis that has already been conducted. We'd like to do an engineering analysis enough to show that this will work; its results are similar to the existing ones...
- Kathryn: so you'll come back with any major differences?
- David: Yes.
- Mary: From an environmental perspective, it's nice to hear the focus on the assets of the wetland. Looking toward the draft comments, it's a little bit concerning to hear the language 'minimal or minimal-to-no' impact to wetlands. We need to remember that any development or construction will cause impacts on the wetlands, and I'd like to see that reflected in the document.
- Cheryl: we've asked for a fair amount of additional information. Would it be possible to have a sub-committee meeting before the next meeting, so there's not 'new' information?
- David: the hope is that we'll have explored all the different alternatives. What we've proposed to do is analyze this new alternative in terms of the issues. To address the many questions raised here today—either through individual contacts or a subcommittee, whichever is most efficient. I'd also ask that if you have written comments about the draft, that you direct those to Alex or to me. I'm guessing we won't be able to meet until mid-January at the earliest. We hope to have a final report by the next meeting so we can say that yes, this is what we are looking for.
- Another action item is the meeting of the City Council with effective information. Do we know when this will be?
- John: I think the next meeting will be the end of January, but that is to discuss the number of lanes. We'll have to set up another meeting.
- Walter: Can we look at when the other committee meetings before scheduling with the City Council. PBAC, for example, was willing to have an extra meeting to discuss before it went to the Council.
- Jeff S: yes, I think UDAG can have a sub-committee meeting before then.
- David: so I suppose we should develop a calendar of when all these meetings will occur before we can take it to city council. Are there any other comments or draft discussions for the group? Audience members?
- No? Alright. This meeting is adjourned. 10:45.

Public Comment

- David asked for public comment. There was none.