



Bethany Boulevard Improvements Project Focus Group Meeting #3 Notes

Meeting Date: September 9, 2010

Time: 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Location: Sunset Presbyterian Church

FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS:

| | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| Doug Alvarez | √ | Paul Enriguez | √ |
| Debra Ashe | | Bob McMillian | √ |
| Hal Ballard | | Charles Murphy | √ |
| Chris Biggs | √ | Steve Murray | √ |
| Ann Bryan | √ | Jeff Oberst | √ |
| Robert Bueermann | √ | Sandra Peterson | √ |
| Stephen Collins | √ | Norm Rose | √ |
| Rob Saxton | √ | John Hartsock | √ |

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------|---|
| Washington County | | | |
| Matt Costigan | √ | Jan Wilson | √ |
| Brian Irish | √ | Magdalena Campuzano | √ |
| Howell Consulting | | | |
| Leslie Howell | √ | | |
| WHPacific | | | |
| Wayne Bauer | √ | Ken Rehms | √ |
| Kittelson & Associates | | | |
| Wade Scarbrough | √ | | |

OTHER ATTENDEES:

| | | |
|---|---|---------|
| Russ Knoebel | Washington County, CPM Principal Engineer | Speaker |
| Jim Evans | Moyano Leadership Group (MLG) , Sr. Project Manager | Speaker |
| approximately 125 others (see sign up sheet for specific names) | | |

Welcome and Introductions - *Leslie Howell (Howell Consulting)*

Leslie introduced herself as the facilitator for the Project Focus group and welcomed everyone. There was a large crowd in attendance (over 100). Leslie reminded the group that this is a Project Focus Group meeting, and therefore the focus will be discussing the project with the PFG only. The public is welcome at these meetings, but they should not be involved in the presentations or discussion. There is time at the end of the meeting for public comment. Leslie reviewed the agenda for the evening.

John Hartsock was introduced as a new member of the Project Focus Group representing the Beaverton School District. John is a Project Manager for Facilities Development.

Leslie asked the group for any corrections to the meeting notes from Meeting No. 2. Ann Bryan requested changes to a statement that she made during the meeting (she submitted revision to staff and these will be included in the final version). No other changes to the notes were made. Upon revision the notes will be posted to the project website. Leslie reminded everyone that all meeting materials (agendas, previous Focus Group Meeting notes and handouts) are posted to the website. The project website address is: <http://projects.whpacific.com/bethanyblvd/>

Items from the “issues bin” from the last meeting were reviewed.

- **Estimate for the 174th Avenue overcrossing.** Preliminary estimate is \$30 million dollars which includes the design, right of way and construction. This is an overpass over both Bronson Road and Highway 26 and ties into Cornell Road. No on-ramps or off-ramps to Highway 26 are anticipated with this project.
- **Traffic Warrant Justification for the signal at 143rd and Oak Hills.** This intersection was identified on the County SPIS (Safety Priority Index System) list back in the early 90’s. Some improvements were made in the mid 90’s with a flashing beacon and turn lanes. Records show a fatality at this location. Additional improvements were made by the County in early 2000’s but they did not have funding for traffic signals (empty conduits were installed). In 2005, a traffic signal was installed.

Question: Does there have to be a fatality to meet warrants for a traffic signal?

Answer: No, this intersection was ranked high on the SPIS list which means there were a lot of accidents at this location. Accidents are only one consideration when analyzing whether a signal is warranted. These improvements did result in this intersection being removed from the SPIS list.

- **Cornell/Bethany Interchange – is the HOV lane to be removed?** Yes, the HOV lane at the eastbound ramp meter signal will be converted to a general-purpose lane upon the completion of the Highway 26 widening.
- **It was asked at the last meeting to place the Right Of Way map on the website.** There were some issues with the website previously that have been resolved and the ROW map is now on the website.

Update on traffic information - Wade Scarbrough (Kittelson and Associates)

Wade distributed two handouts to PFG members to help answer questions regarding the other adjacent parallel corridors (174th, 143rd, 185th, and Saltzman). The handouts showed the results of Metro’s Regional Traffic Model for the project area. The figures showed the 2005 “base model” and the 2035 “future model”, with 185th projected to carry a majority of the future growth. Wade explained that the traffic information being used for the Bethany project is based upon actual counts and a specific model analysis for Bethany.

Question: Were the forecasted volumes based on Bethany becoming a 5-lane road?

Answer: Yes, a 2- or 3-lane road would not handle the projected volumes. The model includes all projects included in the County’s Transportation System Plan (TSP) including those to Bethany.

Question: On the 2035 figure, it shows a drop of about 6,000 vehicles on Bethany, between Bronson and West Union – why?

Answer: The model is not as precise as modeling every single intersection along the corridor. The access points along the corridor are loaded into one or two spots. As people turn into Oak Hills, Telshire, and other neighborhoods along the Bethany corridor there is a drop in traffic but that does not mean all those vehicles are turning into Oak Hills. The 2035 intersection traffic volumes that are being used in the traffic study have been adjusted to better reflect actual turning movement patterns within the project area. The intent of these two figures is to illustrate the overall regional traffic patterns, and to provide an understanding of anticipated growth on other major corridors in the surrounding area.

Question: Why would the vehicle numbers double then?

Answer: In addition to the North Bethany Urbanization Area, the model assumes some densification and redevelopment based on Metro's goals and what is included in the County's Comprehensive Plan. Even if not all of planned redevelopment occurs, we still anticipate a magnitude of traffic increases on Bethany that will exceed the capacity of a 3-lane roadway. A typical 3-lane urban street can carry a maximum of about 20,000 vehicles per day. So even if future traffic is 35,000 or 30,000 vehicles per day, as opposed to the forecast 39,000 from the model, it would require a 4- or 5-lane facility. When it comes to the intersections within the project area, we have refined the numbers from the model to better reflect actual conditions.

Question: The figures are dated Sept 2010 - is that when they were created and if so, why isn't the figure based on current traffic counts.

Answer: The County's "base model" was developed and calibrated using 2005 traffic data. The base model data is only used as a comparison to the 2035 future conditions model to provide an understanding of the expected 30-year growth. The base model data is not used for the actual traffic analysis of existing conditions. The traffic analysis is using more recent traffic counts collected in 2009 and 2010.

Question: We know the Arbor Bethany project is on hold so how is that taken into consideration on the increased traffic numbers.

Answer: The projected volumes shown in Figure 2 assume that the Arbor development will occur before 2035 even though the specific timing of the development is not known. If the Arbor development does not occur, the traffic numbers on Bethany would drop by about 500 vehicles per day.

Question: In the 2035 figure, is the 174th Overpass included in the numbers?

Answer: The overpass project is on the TSP, and the model has been evaluated both with and without it. The results shown in Figure 2 assume the overpass would not be constructed. The model runs with the overpass in place show that there would not be a significant reduction in the traffic on Bethany (shifts about 1,000 or so trips per day). The overpass would not avoid the need for 5 lanes on Bethany.

Question: There are a lot of questions about the number of vehicles on Bethany.

Answer: We are at the capacity limit of a 2 or 3 lane facility today and however the area grows, Bethany will be well over its capacity in the future.

Question: How much traffic is being generated by North Bethany that will use Bethany Blvd?

Answer: It's projected that approximately 10% of the traffic generated from North Bethany is expected to travel on Bethany Blvd.

Question: If the traffic isn't coming from North Bethany and the residents already live here, where is the traffic projected to be coming from?

Answer: It is coming from general growth in the area in addition to densification and redevelopment, per Metro's regional plans. North Bethany is also a significant contributor (even though only 10% of its traffic will use Bethany Blvd, it represents about 6,000 vehicles per day).

Wayne Bauer explained that the model is a tool used for projecting traffic volumes and is from Metro's regional planning model and has to do with growth throughout the whole metro area. Based on the fact that the metro area will grow, it is assumed that traffic will grow accordingly. That is what drives the numbers to increase. The model is global for the whole region and not just Washington County. There was debate among the committee members as to the accuracy of future growth in the area based on Metro's projections.

Wade discussed the Oak Hills / Bethany intersection. The existing volumes at the intersection do not currently meet warrants for a signal (turn volumes are low). However, there have been discussions with County Engineering staff and the Beaverton School District, who would like to reduce number of buses and encourage students walking to school. Based on these discussions, the design team believes the school crossing warrant could be met based on the number of students that live west of Bethany Blvd. At this time, the County is proceeding in the direction of a traffic signal being installed at this intersection.

Highway 26 / Bethany Overcrossing Study – Jim Evans (Moyano Leadership Group) and Russ Knoebel (Washington County)

Russ introduced himself as a Principal Engineer for the Capital Projects Management Division and that he is responsible for the Bethany Overcrossing Study. Russ started with some background information about the project.

- The crossing was constructed in the early 90's, but is already at its capacity and the County realized there was a need to improve the Bethany Overcrossing. In 2007, the County requested federal funds to widen or rebuild the interchange. In 2009 the County once again requested funding, but has not received a response to this request. The County is continuing to work with ODOT to obtain construction funding for the project.
- ODOT is currently widening Highway 26 in response to area growth. In 2008 the County requested that ODOT include the Bethany over crossing in their Highway 26 improvements. That was not done.
- Russ attended ODOT's November 2009 open house for the Highway 26 widening where people asked what was being done about the over crossing.
- Because of the good bidding climate, the Highway 26 work came in at about half the estimated cost. ODOT has refunded most of this money back to the County (approx. \$2.8 mil) which the County has ear-marked for the overpass.
- County has hired Moyano Leadership Group (MLG) to take a look at what are some options the County could pursue with the overpass and related costs.

Jim introduced himself and said he has worked in the metro area for about 30 years as an engineer in both the public and private sector. Jim pulled together a team of experts including the bridge engineer who designed the overpass and a traffic engineer with 30 years experience at ODOT.

- The MLG team has met with ODOT to see what ideas they had to improve the interchange, then took into consideration issues raised by the public. The team then met with Washington County and ODOT to gather traffic information and project traffic out to the future.
- Jim stressed that the major issue for ODOT is the backing up of traffic at the Cornell off-ramp onto Hwy 26. This isn't a major issue now but will be as traffic volumes increase. Other related issues are the congestion on the overpass due to limited lanes and the congestion at the Bronson intersection.
- A comparison matrix was handed out which detailed four options: two short-term, one intermediate and one long-term option and detailed the different options with the PFG. *(These will be posted onto the project website)*
- Jim gave an overview of each option and said that the County decided to pursue the long term option. The next step will be to take it further into preliminary design. The quicker the design is done the sooner it can be implemented to take advantage of current lower construction costs.

Question: If we don't widen Bethany to five lanes, do we still get the same improvements to the bridge?

Answer: The County is dedicated to make the bridge improvements happen as a project entirely separate from Bethany. This improvement will require a five lane section north of the overcrossing, with additional traffic modeling needed to refine the design improvements.

Question: How will the overpass project be funded?

Answer: The County has dedicated \$2.8 million to start the design and right of way acquisition process. The County is working on securing construction funding (via state and/or federal), and at this point, feel pretty confident funding for construction will be available.

Presentation on Draft Design Concepts - Wayne Bauer (WHPacific)

- Wayne presented four design alternatives. He explained that the design team used the information provided by attendees at the Design 101 workshop to develop one alternative, with other alternatives developed to provide for traffic growth as has been discussed. (The summaries from both workshops are on the website and the PFG members and the public are encouraged to read them.) The following is a description of the alternatives that have been developed:
Alternative 4: 5 lane road thru Bronson, tapering to a 3-lane thru the Oak Hills and West Union intersections; (This was the alternative developed based on discussions at the Design 101 workshop.
- Alternative 3: 5 lane road thru Bronson, tapering to a 3-lane, then widening to a 5-lane thru the Oak Hills intersection, tapering back to a 3-lane before widening back out to a 5-lane thru the West Union intersection;
- Alternative 2: 5 lane road thru Bronson, tapering to a 4-lane, then widening to a 5-lane thru the Oak Hills intersection, tapering back to a 4-lane before widening back out to a 5-lane thru the West Union intersection;
- Alternative 1: A county standard 5 lane continuously thru the West Union intersection.

Question: Is the county looking to widen Bethany from West Union up to Springville as 5 lanes as well?

Answer: Not at this time. Bethany has been identified on the transportation plan as 5-lanes all the way to Springville Road, so this improvement will occur sometime in the future.

Question: With the approval of the County, can the standard roadway width be narrowed?

Answer: Yes. We have met with the County Engineer and identified several options to reduce right-of-way (design exceptions). The design team would still need to submit and receive formal approval of the design exceptions (reduction of travel and turning lanes, bike lanes). Current County standard sidewalks are at 5.5 feet and we would not request a design exception to narrow these further.

Question: Is 90 feet the standard width of a 5 lane road?

Answer: County standard is actually 98 ft, which includes landscaped strips between the sidewalk and road. Because right-of-way is already limited, the design team has already dropped the landscaped strip.

Question: This question goes back to the traffic model passed out at the beginning of the meeting .Why are we starting with a 2005 start off a projection. As we all know things have changed.

Answer: For this project, we are using real traffic data collected this year. The 2005 model data is provided for comparison purposes only.

Question: If we do decide to go to something other than 5 lanes would that require an amendment to the transportation plan?

Answer: Not sure; we will put that question on the issues bin.

Question: As I drive around the County, I have been looking for roads that are analogous in function to what this road would be – neighborhoods to other neighborhoods and to a highway, not to a commercial area. I haven't been able to see one that is 5 lanes. Is there one that I can see?

Answer: South of TV Highway on 170th to Farmington, there is a 5 lane similar road. There is not necessarily one roadway that is exactly like this one, but there are similarities that are reflective of what is in this plan.

Question: With all the reducing adjustments that might be made on the width of the road, what does that come down to?

Answer: Approximately 8 ft, four feet from either side.

Question: If we have a question with these future traffic projections, who do we go to at the County?

Answer: Stephen L. Kelly from Planning does all the modeling for the County. He does not generate the model, but the projections come out of Metro.

Question: Can we get someone to present on forecasting and the model?

Answer: This will be added to the issues bin.

Question: What is the process for approval? We have these meetings, where do we go from here? Eventually do you have to make a presentation to get approval?

Answer: The project will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners sometime in December, the date still unknown. The Focus Group will have a couple more meetings to refine the alternatives before they go before the board. When the project goes to the board, we anticipate that all of the alternatives will be presented along with feedback received from the PFG and a design team recommendation. As a reminder, the Focus Group is not a recommending body or a decision making body, but a sounding board.

Question: Will noise and wetland impacts be part of that?

Answer: Yes, we just kicked off the noise analysis last week and should have a short presentation at the November meeting. Wetland delineation has been completed and will be added to the base map and included on all of the alternatives for evaluation. We anticipate bringing an evaluation of each of the alternatives to the next two PFG meetings as they are developed. This will include traffic operations, community and environmental information.

Public Comment Period

Joanne De Haan - Building 5 lanes creates an "attractive nuisance" by attracting traffic that would not otherwise use Bethany.

Micki Sparr - At tonight's meeting and at the Traffic 101 Presentation, all the traffic problems mentioned were outside of the actual Bethany Boulevard project area. The issues are at the overpass, the Bronson intersection and the West Union intersection. There were no problem areas targeted on Bethany Boulevard. She questioned why people's back yards would be taken out to cure a problem that doesn't exist.

Jim Boone - He does not understand the future traffic numbers. He would understand an increase in 10-15 maybe even 20% of current traffic, but a 100% increase in traffic just doesn't make sense.

Robert Erickson - Has concern about noise - whether it is a 3 or a 5 lane road. He doesn't believe the issue of sound barriers has been addressed for those living on either side of Bethany Blvd. One of the Focus Group members interjected that he had asked this question at a previous meeting and that the

answer he got was that a sound barrier is only effective if it is very long and because there are so many intersections along the corridor, it won't be very effective. Matt Costigan replied that he had just met with Michael Minor, our noise person, who will be giving a noise study presentation to the group probably at the November meeting.

Lori Waldo - Lori represents the group a City by Choice. She gave a written copy to the group. This has been posted on the website.

Aaron Harris – Has lived in the area about 35 years (his entire life). Thanked the group for the opportunity to provide feedback. Tonight 4 good options were presented and he would like to know what matrix will be to evaluate these options. Leslie responded that we will come back to the next meeting with an evaluation matrix. The process of evaluating the options will be open and the PFG will have an opportunity to provide their input. Aaron indicated that he realized it may be an unpopular opinion among those present, but he feels there is a need and he supports the widening of Bethany Blvd to five lanes.

The following comments were given by those who did not sign up to speak and did not give their names.

- The overpass is definitely a problem. What is the timeline on it? Matt indicated that the plan is to run that project parallel with the Bethany project. The timeline for the Bethany project is to go through the design phase all of next year and start construction in spring of 2012. At this time we are anticipating a 2 construction season project (about a year and a half) of construction.
- Has a concern with the traffic forecast model and how the numbers were derived.
- A gentleman suggested turning Bethany and 174th into one way streets to help with traffic congestion.
- Need a bigger room. Leslie apologized to those who had to stand. She explained that the PMT had no way of knowing how many people would show up for this meeting besides the Focus Group. The PMT prepared extra copies of materials and provided as much seating as was possible. The PMT will look into a larger space for the next meeting.

A gentleman who lives on Telshire expressed concern about going across two lanes of traffic plus a median and then when it is already difficult to turn left onto Bethany. He imagines it is the same with all the people coming out of all the neighborhoods. He is concerned that the traffic is at the limit and we have to do something about it. He questioned who says 3 lanes isn't going to work? Also, the design team hasn't talked about right of way and whose houses are going to be taken. Are you going to have a meeting where you talk about that? Leslie responded that there will be more information at the next meeting.

- Another individual indicated they feel that all agree that the real problem is the interchange. Suggest taking the money identified for right-of-way for Bethany be used on the interchange project.

End of Meeting Notes

Next PFG Meeting: Thursday, October 7th from 5:00 to 7:00.

(We will try to get a bigger room - it may be at a different location – stay tuned)

Future PFG Meetings: November 4th and December 2nd.

