



Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting #2 August 9, 2001

Meeting Summary: Draft for review

In Attendance

CAC Members

Lynn Batterman
Michael Bendsten
Bob Corkrum
Jack Feil
Mike Kelly
Robert Larse
Craig Larsen
Don Miller
Doug Pauli
Lynda Pheasant
Richard Thompson

Project Staff

Terry Mattson, WSDOT
David Honsinger, WSDOT
Paul Mahre, WSDOT
Greg Morehouse, WSDOT
Dan Sarles, WSDOT
Robert Stull, WSDOT
Elmira Forner, Washington Transportation Commission
Rick Chapman, URS
Gary Harshman, URS
Maureen Dunn, PRR
Marcia Wagoner, PRR

Meeting handouts

CAC Meeting # 2 Agenda
CAC Frequently Asked Questions
Regional Transportation Summary
Screening Process
Decision Making Process
2000 PM Peek Hour Volumes
WSDOT Notice to Consultants SR 28 Environmental Impact Statement Study
White Paper
Transportation Corridor Study
SR-285 Bridge Study INCA Project No. 97121
Supplemental Conceptual Solutions, SF-3744
Columbia River Bridge 285-10 Additional Lane Analysis Request
Traffic Counts SR 285 and SR 28
State Highway System Plan 1999-2018
1999 Annual Traffic Report
North Central Regional Transportation Planning Organization Plan
Wenatchee Area Transportation Study
Technical Discipline Study CAC Worksheet

Display Boards

Decision Making Process
Traffic Count
Screening Process
Hand Drawn History of Regional Transportation System

Introduction — Terry Mattson, WSDOT

Terry Mattson welcomed the Citizens' Advisory Committee members and briefly discussed the meeting held in June. Mattson noted that meeting materials were distributed prior to the August 9 meeting in response to CAC comments regarding material availability at the first meeting. Two recent mailings to the CAC members included: an Interdisciplinary team worksheet, which identified the roles and responsibilities of each group and the disciplines; an agenda for the August 9 CAC meeting; the first- and second-level screening reports; the Interdisciplinary team recommendations; and maps of the five concept alignments.

Everyone introduced themselves and stated what organization they are a member of and where they live.

Roles and Responsibilities — Dan Sarles, WSDOT

Dan Sarles gave a brief overview of the purpose of the project and the roles and responsibilities of the CAC.

Project purpose: The purpose of the Eastside Corridor project is to identify a transportation alternative that will enhance safety and increase mobility, including the movement of people, goods, and services on the Sunset Highway Corridor (SR 28) in the East Wenatchee urban area from 9th Street to the Odabashian Bridge. Any proposal must also meet the needs of the community and comply with all Federal and State environmental laws.

CAC role: The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is an advisory group composed of people within the community representing a broad range of views, backgrounds, and interests. The CAC has been employed in order to ensure active and continuous public involvement throughout the life of this project. The committee serves in an advisory role to the project team and will meet prior to major project milestones to offer advice on significant decisions.

Regional Transportation Planning Overview — Dave Honsinger, WSDOT

Dave Honsinger discussed how the project fits into the context of regional transportation projects. The Eastside Corridor project is one of approximately ten ongoing roadway improvement projects in the greater Wenatchee area. Collectively these projects are being designed and built concurrently in expectation of the future infrastructure needs in the Wenatchee Valley.

There are four determining components that directly affect transportation planning and infrastructure design: land use, population, density and location of employment. Transportation improvement projects in the Valley date back to 1933, when the north end Wenatchee River Bridge was built to meet the growing needs in the region. Nineteen years later, the south bridge over the Columbia River was built as land use, population, and employment began to change. As a means to identify current and future needs of the area, the first Wenatchee Area Transportation Study (WATS) was developed in the 1960's by the WSDOT. Construction of the Odabashian

Bridge was a direct result of that study. Transportation needs in the area were again reviewed in the 1990's in a multi-agency study that was completed in 1997. The Growth Management Act (GMA), passed by the state in the 1990's with the intention of identifying infrastructure improvements needed due to growth, contributed to the development of the revised WATS (1997) plan.

The WATS plan identified the expected needs of the area. One important factor when determining future needs in a region is to identify when a population will reach 50,000. Upon reaching this level of population, Federal law mandates transportation planning. The population in Wenatchee Valley is entering this phase and as a result transportation needs are concurrently being evaluated. The October 2002 traffic study will determine what type of impacts will exist in the area.

WSDOT is beginning to study the Eastside Corridor in order to make it an effective roadway coinciding with the existing streets and other future developments.

Discussion — CAC

- Corkrum** When there is a specified budget for a project, and the budget is compressed in the fourth year in a six-year schedule, what do you do?
- Honsinger** On a statewide basis there is some flexibility in certain areas of a project.
- Mahre** I am a Program Manager for the Washington State Department of Transportation. The amount of funding and distribution of funding is dependent on the size of the project and amount of flexibility. A certain allotment of money is strictly dedicated to particular deficiencies, such as mobility, in smaller projects. For example, a 50 million dollar project may allot ten million dollars for mobility. That funding should not be reallocated to address different deficiencies. However, with a larger project such as a 400 million dollar project, there is more flexibility to reallocate funding within the program according to project needs.
- Forner** Are the project funds you are describing solely from Transportation Improvement Board funding?
- Honsinger** The two big funding sources for DOT projects are the Federal and State governments. Their monies can be categorized into several different types of funds.
- Mattson** Some DOT funding priorities are identified by looking at ways to improve the existing infrastructure under the current fiscal reality. The Wenatchee Area Transportation Study (WATS) identified the population, areas of employment, deficiency areas, the bridges, and needs of the areas served by the Eastside Corridor. As the area population increases, traffic will only get worse. The environmental review process required by NEPA will help us determine what is environmentally feasible.
- Mahre** The way we complete mobility or congestion analysis is to identify the location of the worst congestion in a particular area. The North/South traffic count numbers for this project were dropped because this direction contains mostly local traffic.
- Pheasant** What is the trigger point of the delay in traffic in your study?
- Mahre** We measured the delay in East Wenatchee, using a computer model to determine how long the peak rush hour lasts, and how long one person is delayed.
- Pheasant** What measurement results would reflect satisfactory movement of vehicles?
- Mattson** We do not have an answer for you currently, but we are looking into it.

- Honsinger** We address what we can with additional lanes, carpooling, and non-motorized transportation. There are many large cities that are able to use these methods to reduce congestion and increase safety. However, in this particular circumstance, these methods are not enough. The DOT is trying to determine the traffic needs that have arisen due to growth and consequent changes in land use.
- Pheasant** Does the preservation of land use ever take precedence over transportation infrastructure needs?
- Honsinger** When the land use is for parks and recreation it is difficult to impact that land use with transportation improvements.
- Forner** Are you aware of the Cascade group efforts? There are people in Canada who are looking at tourism movement and how it relates to the management of traffic corridors.
- Sarles** Yes we are aware of efforts of Cascadia.
- Pheasant** Was the Wenatchee Avenue Corridor state route always managed by the State?
- Honsinger** No, for a period of about 15 years the Wenatchee Avenue Corridor was managed by the City and the County. It has been managed by the State since the 1990's.
- Pheasant** What is the procedural change?
- Honsinger** Route jurisdiction transfer is the reason for the procedural change. We, the State, would like to give it back to the city.

Summary

The CAC members discussed funding sources and deficiencies for the project, as well as impacts on land use, and tourism movement and ownership of the Eastside Corridor.

Screening Process — Rick Chapman, URS

Rick Chapman explained the purpose and difference between the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). NEPA is a requirement that projects with federal funding most follow and it identifies how the environment is impacted. SEPA is a requirement for State funded projects. Fulfilling the requirements of the NEPA or SEPA process is the first step of the project.

Chapman also briefly clarified the roles and responsibilities of the project team, IDT members and the CAC and discussed the screening process for the Eastside Corridor.

The project team includes: Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) managers, traffic consulting team, transportation team, survey team, public involvement team, and interdisciplinary team (IDT) members. The project team recommends and provides information to the IDT. The standard IDT is composed of approximately five to six people as outlined in WSDOT's Design Manual. However, due to the complexity and importance of the Eastside Corridor, a more diverse and larger IDT team developed. The Eastside Corridor IDT team consists of a variety of discipline representatives within WSDOT, as well as a city representative, Douglas County representative, and Federal Highway Administration representative. The CAC is comprised of a broad range of residents, business owners, and citizens with a wide range of viewpoints.

Following the Stakeholder workshop held in May of this year, the project team had thirty-four alternative routes to review and consider for inclusion and evaluation in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Because of the detailed level of study and analysis that occurs in preparation of an EIS, only a reasonable number of alternatives can be considered for detailed

study. In order to determine which alternatives would be the most appropriate for study in the Eastside Corridor EIS, the project team began a screening process. The process involved rating each of the thirty-four alternatives with respect to specific criteria. The criteria included transportation service improvements, safety, anticipated engineering and regulatory feasibility, as well as minimizing residential and business displacement. Sixteen alternatives were deemed viable after this first round of screening.

The project team next evaluated the sixteen alignments against more detailed criteria which included impacts to neighborhood connectivity, impacts to parks, impacts to recreational facilities, impacts to cultural resources, farmland and biological resources. These criteria were developed by roadway design engineers, traffic engineers and environmental planners, all of whom were informed by stakeholder and community input from the public meetings and open houses held in the spring. The second round of evaluation and screening was an iterative process. After input from the public and the interdisciplinary team, four alternative routes emerged for detailed analysis and study in the environmental impact statement.

Discussion — CAC

- Corkrum** Is Terry Mattson the only representative who presents speakers bureaus? Later on in the process, when choices are more difficult, will there be more representatives?
- Chapman** Terry is the main speaker, however, others are available if necessary.
- Corkrum** Can you please articulate the alternatives in the second level screening analysis table?
- Chapman** The four alternatives are: one-way couplet; western route alternative with a four lane parkway out of the jurisdictional area (three hundred-feet away from the ordinary high water mark) of the ESA; Cascade Avenue expansion to five-lanes and Sunset Highway expansion to three lanes, four-lane freeway on existing Sunset, and the no-build alternative. The seven-lane highway concept from the second-level screening would have a large impact on Sunset Highway, and it was not in the character of the community. This alternative will not be carried forward to the EIS. The IDT agreed with the western route; one-way couplet; swapping five lanes on Sunset Highway and three lanes on Cascade Avenue; and improvements on Sunset Highway. The city and county have programmed Eastmont Avenue to be expanded to three lanes between 19th and Lacey. The other route, which includes extending three lanes north, and five lanes on Sunset Highway is essentially the lower bench route and is basically the same on Eastmont Avenue.
- Bendtsen** Would the one-way couplet shift the state facility to include Cascade?
- Chapman** Yes.
- Bendtsen** Why is the one-way couplet route not considered a major facility if it is just cut in half? Changing a five-lane road to a three-lane road is still a major facility.
- Chapman** The one-way couplet route travels through quite a few neighborhoods. It would not be a five-lane facility. It is now a city street that would become a State Highway in this scenario.
- Bendtsen** Freight mobility will rely on this route. The neighborhood is still going to be heavily impacted by a three-lane state highway.
- Chapman** It is true that trucks would be using this route.
- Bendsten** Half of a major route to a neighborhood is still going to impact the neighborhood.
- Chapman** But it is still going to be half the volume of a two-direction highway.
- Sarles** I suggest we note the comments and move on to discuss the other alignments.

- Corkrum** Originally the couplet on Cascade Avenue ranked high in the second-level screening process.
- Chapman** The second-level screening process took the best couplet option. However, this does not mean that this alternative is obsolete.
- Feil** Will moving the roadway two hundred feet outside of the waterfront be consistent with the Adjacent Land Policy?
- Chapman** The alignment has been moved three hundred feet outside the ordinary high water mark. There is a permit required for activity within two hundred feet of the shoreline for compliance with the State Shoreline Management Act. Activity within three hundred feet of the OHWM triggers permit requirements under the Endangered Species Act. These permits will be required where the alignments tie-in at the south end, where the existing SR28 is within two hundred feet of the Columbia River.
- Harshman** We are currently addressing adjacent lands policy. The extent of the impact of the three hundred-foot buffer required by the Endangered Species Act is not yet determined. Three hundred feet from the high watermark is considered critical habitat according to the Endangered Species Act.
- Sarles** This information has yet to be worked through and will be taken into consideration for each alignment.
- Feil** There is a no build alternative.
- Batterman** The no build alternative is unacceptable.
- Pheasant** Assuming the riverfront route is accepted, how does the high watermark change with the dam? What if the dam rises to the highway point and Rocky Beach Dam washes over?
- Chapman** If the dam is raised prior to the construction of the road, the new ordinary high water mark will be taken into consideration.
- Thompson** The roadway from here to Canada would take everything from our valley. Its not like the road can go around the Valley.
- Sarles** The volumes of traffic going through the Wenatchee Valley range from 4,000 to 6,000 and only ten percent of vehicles travel through that corridor. The current highway would not support the vehicles in 20 years, nor would it be cost beneficial.
- Corkrum** When you put engineers in charge with laying out asphalt, they need six to eight lanes. How can we tell that we will need six to eight lanes in 20 years?
- Chapman** Based on traffic capacity, a seven-lane roadway with the current access is the type of facility Wenatchee will need.
- Corkrum** But only ten percent of the traffic goes through the area.
- Chapman** Yes, but in ten years, the volumes of vehicles will increase.
- Corkrum** If we do not want to put people out of their homes, and if cost is not an object we should build a raised highway up like the Alaskan Viaduct.
- Thompson** The only problem with that is that we don't have bridges.
- Corkrum** If safety is a priority, money cannot be an obstacle.
- Chapman** A viaduct would create a barrier in the community.
- Sarles** We should not discuss something that is not feasible to build.
- Larsen** A viaduct would be too expensive, even if money were not an obstacle.
- Corkrum** Common sense tells us that cost is an issue.
- Sarles** Direct and indirect cost has not been completely identified.
- Chapman** We received significant comments about cost and as a result have included it on the second-level screening document for reference only.
- Corkrum** I understand the situation with the model and alternatives. What is the land use going to be like in the future?

- Chapman** There are currently between 640-800 vehicles in the evening peak hours on the existing SR28 roadway segment. 750 – 900 vehicles on the road approaches the full capacity of the existing facility.
- Feil** When we project future traffic needs, we need to think about the Wenatchee Valley’s current economic situation. Currently we are in a recession and its only going to be worse. Being involved with the fruit industry, I believe that this project will tank. We might be projecting more of a problem than what is the case. Maybe in five years, it will be the right time to build an upper bench route.
- Chapman** In 2006 the project may be complete and in 2025 with improvements the roadway will satisfy the needs for the next 20-25 years. The needs will be defined in the EIS.
- Forner** Will the project be completed in five to six years?
- Chapman** It could range from two to six years.
- Forner** If projections are made in five years, the road will take five years to build. So, at that point it would already be too late. What does it depend on?
- Chapman** It depends on funding.
- Pauli** Two major warehouses have shut down recently and this trend is going to continue. The fruit industry is suffering from competition with other markets.
- Chapman** Traffic needs and land use issues are separate but interrelated entities. The type of land use that exists in the Valley does not redefine the development of transportation projects until the land use is modified.
- Pheasant** Do all alternatives satisfy the state route’s need?
- Chapman** A two to three lane highway will attract more traffic, which is why we have the no build alternative. This alternative would include currently planned improvements on the Eastside Corridor.
- Bendsten** Widening Cascade Avenue and making improvements on the Eastside Corridor is more desirable because more people travel on these roadways.
- Corkrum** Traffic counts last year showed that there are two hundred people going to and from Badger Mountain.
- Chapman** Traffic counts were performed in segments and were visually evaluated after modeling for verification of actual traffic trends. Not all of the counts are actual.
- Thompson** There are two hundred homes, and there are two hundred and fifty cars on Badger Mountain. An average person travels ten times per day.
- Chapman** The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) is performed for an entire day. During certain hours the peak hour carries more vehicles than an hourly average developed by dividing the ADT by the number of hours in a day.

Summary

The four alternative routes were identified and explained to the CAC, which raised some questions and concerns, such as compliance with the ESA and the second-level screening process by which the four alternatives were identified. Many of the members raised questions regarding the traffic study and its results.

CAC Assignment — Discipline Studies Worksheet - Rick Chapman, URS

Chapman explained the discipline studies workshop, which will assist the project team in their preparation of technical reports for the DEIS. The worksheet was distributed under the assumption that the regulatory administration would approve the recommended four concept alignments. Each alternative to be studied with respect to the different disciplines are evaluated in

a technical discipline report. The discipline study reports will provide information on elements such as community, wetlands or specific animals in the area.

Each CAC member will receive a map with the specified final four alternatives to be used with the discipline worksheets. These four alternatives will be studied in the next six to eight months and a completed draft EIS will be finished in March 2002.

There will be another CAC meeting in November, followed by a public meeting in the summer of 2002.

- Corkrum** Are some of the answers on the discipline worksheets obvious? Because I would say that the riverfront obviously has wetlands.
- Chapman** The project team has professional expertise and specialists to further examine areas.
- Harshman** We recently had people inspect the wetlands in the area. They recognize the value of anecdotal information. We are contemplating a piece of land and the characteristics that define a wetland. Someone already knew of the wetlands.
- Chapman** Maybe someone knows about hazardous spills.
- Bendtsen** Will we have maps to help us? Will you be able to see specific details?
- Chapman** Yes, each alignment will have an aerial photograph.
- Corkrum** It would be helpful for you to note information around the area of Cascade Avenue. It is important to know where things are relative to alignments, but not just on specific alignments.
- Chapman** This is the kind of information that we need to know.
- Corkrum** What is the best guess about where wetlands are located?
- Chapman** Preliminary investigations of wetlands have been completed and are generally near the river.
- Pheasant** Are there creative solutions that have been implemented nationwide?
- Chapman** For a situation like this there are not. Traffic Demand Management plans (TDM) include shifting work hours and carpooling to work. In this community, these types of programs would not be as effective.
- Pheasant** I was wondering if you could put utilities on one side of the highway or use other strategies such as a center turn lane. The only problem with the center turn lane is that continuing traffic passes by those center lanes at great speed.
- Chapman** High density is another land use solution, but there is not an opportunity to change the land use here in East Wenatchee. I cannot think of any specific new ideas for altering traffic patterns.
- Corkrum** Who designed the school bus stops on SR-28? When a school bus stops I am annoyed. How can they stop on the highway?
- Chapman** School buses are not allowed on limited access freeways. The Eastside Corridor is not a limited access freeway. We will be looking into this.

Summary

The purpose of the technical discipline study worksheet was identified. Alternative land use and transportation methods were discussed by several CAC members.

Summary of What Was Heard — Marcia Wagoner, PRR

Marcia Wagoner summarized ideas and questions that people asked during the meeting.

- ◆ Michael Bendsten suggested that shifting to three lanes on Cascade Avenue will still impact neighborhoods.
- ◆ Jack Feil discussed the consistency policies and the changing economics of the area.
- ◆ Lynda Pheasant does not think that the no-build alternative is acceptable. She was also interested in the high watermark and how it could affect the roadway. She was curious if other creative options like land use would be alternative solutions.
- ◆ Bob Corkrum wanted to know how cost played a role in the decision making process and was curious why a viaduct would not work. He was also interested in the historical shift in traffic, freight, economy, and whether this may be going another way. Bob wants to make sure the completed worksheets will be used by the project team.
- ◆ Mike Kelly suggested that a CAC meeting would be best if scheduled later in the year for harvesters. Late November would work best for farmers.
- ◆ Elmira Forner asked questions concerning the WATS study. Would urban planning have an effect on the impact of alternatives in local planning organizations? Dan Sarles said that the WATS study did not have an impact on the selection of alternatives and freight mobility is taken into consideration.

Next Steps — Terry Mattson, WSDOT

Mattson closed the CAC meeting # 2 and explained that the comments from today will be sent to the members for their review. The alternative alignments will be presented to Don Senn, the Regional Administrator. An Open House on EIS Alternatives will be held next Thursday, August 16, 2001. After the Open House the EIS studies will begin.

Bob Larse Many of the Eastside Corridor residents do not participate in the public meeting because of the traffic and distance between their homes and the meeting location in Wenatchee. Have other facilities been contacted?

Mattson Yes, many of the facilities such as the elementary schools and the PUD have been contacted.

Feil The East Wenatchee Grange Hall has a lot of parking and would be closer to the local residents.

Corkrum How many people are expected to attend the Open House?

Chapman We planned for eighty and had one hundred people attend at the last meeting.

Larse There were a lot more people on the other side.

Mattson Thank you for participating. Comments from this meeting have been noted and will be sent to you.

Miller This was a very, very informative process as opposed to last time.

Summary Several CAC members requested that future open houses should be held in East Wenatchee in order to provide for the East Wenatchee residents.

Additional Comments

Thompson I think that we should put up a sign that says “Slow Down” if only ten percent of the traffic is considered through traffic. We all should enjoy the valley.

The CAC meeting was adjourned, and the next meeting will be scheduled in November.