

MEETING TITLE: Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
DATE: December 9, 2009, 9:00 AM to 11:45 AM
INVITEES: Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee Members
LOCATION: Columbia River Crossing Project Office, Vancouver, WA

TIME	AGENDA ITEM
9:00	Introductions
9:05	Review of previous meeting summary and review of Action Items
9:15	Update of December 4 Project Sponsors Council meeting
9:30	Update on overall design refinements
9:50	Update on Hayden Island transit/pedestrian/bicycle facility interface
10:10	Update on Vancouver Community Connector proposal
10:25	Update on pedestrian and bicycle facilities at and near 39 th Street interchange
10:35	Presentation on bike parking opportunities
11:05	Update on pedestrian/bicycle connections and map of existing and planned facilities
11:15	Update on public involvement activities
11:25	Other topics
11:30	Next meeting topics
11:35	Input by public
11:45	Adjourn

Columbia River **Draft Meeting Summary**

MEETING: Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC)
DATE: October 28, 2009, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
LOCATION: Columbia River Crossing (CRC), 700 Washington St., Suite 300, Vancouver WA
FROM: David Parisi

PBAC ATTENDEES:

Bertelsen, April	Portland Bureau of Transportation
Brown, Kyle	Community Choices
Burgstahler, Ken	Washington State Dept. of Transportation
Christopher, Basil	Oregon Department of Transportation
Corkill, Seanette	Arnada Neighborhood Assn.
Elven-Snyder, Debbie	C-TRAN
Greulich, Joe	Clark County Bicycle Advisory Committee
Merrick, Rod	Portland Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Rehberg, Shayna	Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee
Valenta, Walter	Bridgeton Neighborhood Assn., CRC Urban Design Advisory Committee
Wuest, Phil	City of Vancouver Transportation Services

CRC STAFF ATTENDEES:

Freeman, Natalie	Design engineering
Horowitz, Zachary	Traffic engineering
Liles, Casey	Design engineering
Ovington, Peter	Communications
Parisi, David	PBAC facilitator
Putney, Mandy	Communications
Witter, Steve	Transit planning

GUESTS:

Boulanger, Todd	BikeMe!
Hampsten, David	East Portland Action Group
Howton, Brad	Hayden Island Neighborhood Network

Review of previous meeting summary and action items

The summary of the September 23 meeting was approved with no changes.

Letter from project directors

David Parisi shared a letter from the CRC project directors thanking PBAC for their work to date and stating support from the CRC Project Sponsors Council for PBAC’s path recommendation and maintenance/security plan. A copy of the letter was emailed to members and is also found online at: http://www.columbiarivercrossing.org/FileLibrary/MeetingMaterials/BikePed/PSCletter_102809.pdf

Update on design refinement process

David Parisi provided an update on the project’s efforts to find cost savings for the project by refining the design while still meeting the project’s purpose and need. He emphasized that improving pedestrian and

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bike facilities are part of the purpose and need statement; this will not change. He also noted that, at this time, no changes to the proposed pedestrian and bicycle facilities across the Columbia River have been suggested as part of the cost-saving measures. More information is expected by the end of this year about the design refinements and related cost reductions. These will be a topic of conversation at the Dec. 4 CRC Project Sponsors Council meeting.

Casey Liles said that if the project reuses the existing North Portland Harbor bridge, it would move the highway alignment slightly to the east and could mean eliminating the path on the existing Harbor bridge. North Tomahawk Island Drive and N. Jantzen Beach Drive would be about eight feet lower, which could affect pedestrian and bicycle circulation on Hayden Island. Casey emphasized that there is still a lot of design work to be done.

Discussion

Brad Howton said that, in his opinion, if the Harbor bridge is kept and the road is lowered, it would have a detrimental impact on bike and pedestrian circulation on Hayden Island.

Walter Valenta said island residents are worried about the change in usability and sense of safety for the path on the future “Main Street” of N. Tomahawk Island Drive.

Phil Wuest asked whether the project is considering a 10-lane bridge for the main river crossing and whether that would affect the multi-use path. Casey said a 10-lane option doesn’t change the path width much, perhaps by a foot or so, but more detailed design work needs to be done to confirm this.

Todd Boulanger asked if it reduces the width further, would that open the discussion about making the other bridge cell available for bikes and pedestrians? Phil Wuest and April Bertelsen said they would like the project to look at access to that second cell.

Casey said another refinement, the phasing in of the 39th St. interchange, could affect bike and pedestrian improvements in that area.

David Parisi said more information on design refinements are expected at the Dec. 4 Project Sponsors Council meeting.

Update on transit alignment

Steve Witter, CRC transit manager, discussed the proposed light rail alignment and how the design refinements could affect it. If the North Portland Harbor bridge is retained, it will shift the highway and transit alignments to the east, which allows the light rail station to be lower to the ground. That has some advantages, but the neighborhood is also concerned about Tomahawk Island Drive being recessed further below grade.

Witter summarized the light rail alignment in Vancouver and the recommendations of the CRC’s citizen advisory group, the Vancouver Working Group (VWG). He touched on issues including the importance of access to the Central Park neighborhood and how the VWG reached their recommendation in favor of light rail traveling east/west on McLoughlin Boulevard. Their vote on this alignment was closely split, as several members preferred light rail on 17th Street, summarized in a minority report available online.

The Vancouver City Council held a meeting on October 19 to hear the VWG recommendations. Like the VWG, City Council had some differing opinions about the east/west alignment. Council has asked the project to do a more detailed analysis of cost, travel time, real estate impacts, and zoning. The project is hoping to return to Council in December for another discussion (date still to be determined).

Discussion

Walter Valenta asked if light rail will also be subject to value engineering. At this time the transit project has been asked to make any refinements or consider any cost cutting measures. This of course could change over time. Steve Witter said reducing park and ride sizes is not feasible due to the need to provide adequate ridership to meet Federal Transit Administration requirements.

Ken Burgstahler asked whether the downtown Vancouver streets with light rail will be designed for one-way or two-way traffic. Steve Witter said the plan is for them to convert to two-way with light rail in the center. But it is possible, he said, that trains could run north on Washington and south on Broadway.

Todd Boulanger asked if staff have looked at pushing the track onto the Clark College property to take it out of the center of the street and eliminate the safety concern with the 17th Ave. alignment option crossing the roadway at McLoughlin. Steve responded that the project would look at shifting the LRT alignment to the south as a possible solution to this condition amongst others.

Steve discussed how McLoughlin Blvd. is the preferred bicycle route from east of the freeway and that bicyclists do not want to intersect with light rail. Phil Wuest added that anything other than bike lanes on McLoughlin would be contrary to city policy.

Update on ped/bike facilities in Marine Drive interchange area

Steve Witter discussed a map showing the proposed Marine Drive interchange design reflecting support of the CRC Marine Drive Stakeholder Group. David Parisi said this option allows a more direct east/west route for the 40-Mile Loop Trail.

Steve stated that to allow an at-grade crossing, the transit design criteria was stretched to create an ADA-compliant crossing of the light rail track by bicycles. This would affect light rail travel time, however, and project staff are doing their best to modify their design to allow this and are about 85 percent there.

Todd Boulanger wondered if a modified design would pose challenges during winter ice events, which he said can be challenging for TriMet. Steve said there are already some similar areas where design criteria are exceeded.

Rod Merrick and others said how pleased they are by the design change and thanked staff for their work.

Input on ped/bike interface at Hayden Island station

Steve Witter discussed the role of the Portland Working Group (PWG), the project's light rail citizen advisory committee. Members of the PWG also attending PBAC meetings include Walter Valenta and Brad Howton.

The PWG looked at seven design topics: station position and type; height and vertical circulation; pedestrian and bike connectivity; relationship to adjacent streets and developments; station architecture and gateway treatments; activity and animation of station; and safety and security.

Witter showed three design concepts for the Hayden Island light rail station: an elevated, a gateway, and a plaza concept.

Elevated station concept

This concept reflects the project's locally preferred alternative. There is a desire to activate this space with retail space. The station area would include a "mixing area" of light rail riders and a through bikeway to the east.

Todd Boulanger said you won't be able to fill the plaza with bike lockers. He asked how adequate secure bike parking will be provided at the station.

Basil Christopher asked what has been the discussion so far about bike parking at stations. David said Todd gave a great presentation at the March 25, 2009 PBAC meeting on this topic. Bike parking will be revisited during the PBAC's December meeting.

Joe Greulich asked how this station's design will be different than the MAX Green Line crossing at SE Foster Road where it's elevated and there's a conflict with bicyclists. Natalie Freeman, CRC design engineering, said in the CRC case the path is on the east side so there won't be pedestrians on both sides conflicting with the bike path. The path will feature a widened "mixing area" on the station side.

Width of path

Rod Merrick asked what the path width on Hayden Island is proposed to be. David said it is 24 feet wide on the bridge itself, then a 16-foot wide multi-use path at points south and north. Rod said 16 feet should be a minimum.

Todd Boulanger added that the new bridge will be designed to last 100 years and the paths leading to it are more like 20-40 year facilities. Staff said everything outside the main bridge is assumed to be 16 feet wide.

Brad Howton said this highlights a broader issue on Hayden Island. You can't think of all the transportation on the island as an express lane; you're coming through a community, so you'll have to slow down. The same issues are coming up regarding highway interchange designs and other elements. Path users will have to recognize that on Hayden Island they're in a town and not just passing through.

Gateway concept

This concept is centered over Tomahawk Island Drive, which is recessed eight feet. This concept does not include elevators.

Brad Howton said the last PBAC meeting summary included a comment from Rod Merrick that the station will be surrounded by big box stores, but in fact the island redevelopment is going to be more mixed-use retail.

Plaza concept

This concept offsets the station to the north and creates a nice urban plaza, bounded by buildings and the station but not covered in shadow. Attendees of the Sept. 30 light rail workshop reacted positively to this concept since it makes the space more usable.

Todd Boulanger asked for staff to consider three things: First, be savvy about elevator placement. In the past, we've asked that they be placed so a cyclist with a trailer can pull through and exit in one direction. Also look at elevator placement to activate the street and so pedestrians from other zones don't have to walk so far to access it. Second, look at how cyclists are accessing the street. We don't want them to have to dismount and act like a pedestrian. Third, there's an opportunity here for valet bike parking such as a "BikeStation."

Steve Witter said staff will be creating visualizations, and next steps for the PWG include discussion of Tomahawk Island Drive at their November meeting.

Walter Valenta said the Hayden Island station represents many things: a local community gathering area, a mall revitalization process, and a commuter through route. But it will also become a tourist attraction, he said, where light rail riders will want to get off at the Hayden Island or downtown Vancouver station and cross the bridge for sightseeing.

Brad Howton said there are also pedestrian/bicycle issues at the undercrossings at the north and south sides of the island.

David Parisi said next month's PBAC meeting will include discussion of bike parking at park and ride lots and a summary of Todd Boulanger's slide presentation on bike parking from March 2009.

Input on ped/bike facilities at and near 39th Street interchange

This agenda item will be discussed at the next PBAC meeting.

Input on ped/bike connections; updated bicycle network map

Zach Horowitz discussed connections in the rest of the project corridor using a revised map titled *Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in Portland and Vancouver*. He created an updated map of existing and planned facilities. The main difference between this version and the old one is that it now contains updates from the City of Portland's draft bicycle master plan and each city has different ways of

categorizing what qualifies as a bike route. Zach used the *Cycling the Cities* map as a baseline. The revised map shows existing and proposed multi-use paths and roads showing existing and proposed bike lanes.

Comments and edits

PBAC members had the following comments and suggested edits:

- Change the legend to read “Proposed Bike Lane / Facility”.
- Update map to reflect the Hayden Island Plan and to make sure Tomahawk Island Drive appears on the map.
- Show the Bridgeton path as a solid red line but have an arrow label pointing to it.
- Add a note in the legend that sidewalks are required on streets and that there are additional pedestrian facilities.

Todd Boulanger said he has some comments and corrections which he will pass on to Zach.

Presentation on tolling considerations

Mandy Putney, CRC communications consultant task manager, gave a slide presentation about tolling the CRC project. She discussed assumptions of the tolling study, how electronic tolling would work, preliminary tolling scenarios, traffic patterns and volumes, and tolling outreach activities to the public. Over 4,000 people have responded to an online tolling survey so far. A report from the CRC Tolling Study Committee will go to the Oregon and Washington legislatures and governors in January 2010.

Discussion

Note: PBAC member questions are indicated by “Q” and staff responses by “A”.

Truck tolls: Q: What will be the difference between toll rates for trucks and autos? A: The project is assuming a higher rate for trucks based on weight, not on axles.

Capacity vs. congestion: Q: How does the tolling study address capacity and congestion? A: The project has also measured the duration of congestion for I-205, looking at traffic volumes, travel times, etc.

Rod Merrick suggested that, for slide #11 showing a graph of congestion levels, it would help to show an overlay of capacities at some level of congestion, such as level of service. David Parisi replied that duration of congestion is used because it takes into account the downstream effects of congestion elsewhere, such as at I-84. Rod felt that while the graphs show only the river crossings, the regional, bigger question is more important than just at the bridge. Mandy said some of this is covered in the project’s additional tolling scenarios, the technical analysis of which is still being conducted.

Employer benefits: Q: The tolling issue is being used as a wedge in Vancouver’s mayoral election. I haven’t heard your strategy to address those who say commuters can’t afford a toll. Are you looking at research on employer transit benefits provided? Could they handle the toll cost or offer some income tax break? A: Mandy said some employers near the Tacoma Narrows Bridge have added a benefit for employees. Rod felt that this idea could make tolling more digestible to the public.

Toll location: Q: Will the toll only apply to the northbound bridge? Mandy said the project assumes tolls in both directions of travel. The main river crossing would be the toll point.

Tolling of bicyclists and pedestrians: Q: Are these users going to be tolled? A: The project is assuming no tolls for them or for transit users. Todd commented that if there is a toll on motorists, we should expect more demand for the bicycle/pedestrian path.

Walter asked the group how proactive PBAC should be about bikes and pedestrians not being charged tolls. He said these users and transit riders help to relieve congestion, so maybe they need to create a policy document about this benefit. There’s a fair argument, he said, that we’re making a contribution in lieu of a toll because we provide congestion reduction through these other modes.

Variable tolls: Q: Are you looking at fixed time periods or active management? A: Mandy said we're looking at a set toll schedule based on peak / off-peak hours. The state transportation commissions set the rates.

Freight: Q: Are you also looking at variable tolls for freight? A: Mandy said we're assuming a higher rate for freight at certain times of the day.

Construction and maintenance: Q: If tolling would help to pay for construction and maintenance, would that include all maintenance for the project, including the multi-use path? How will path maintenance be paid for? A: The assumption is that both states will allow a portion of tolls to be used for this purpose. Walter Valenta added that PBAC wants to make sure that tolling enabling legislation doesn't preclude using toll revenue for path maintenance and security.

I-205: Q: If I-205 is tolled, will that money be used for the I-205 corridor? A: That's a question still to be determined by policymakers.

Early tolling: Q: Did the Washington legislature approve tolls to replace the SR 520 floating bridge and will it start early with construction? A: They are looking at an early toll. After the legislature says it's okay to toll, then the state transportation commission sets the rates.

End date of tolls: Q: How many years would it take to pay off the debt? A: The project is assuming 30-year bonds. No decision has been made yet about whether tolls would remain in place in perpetuity. This will be a policy decision, not a project decision.

Review of project area constraints along I-5

Project staff, including Matt Deml, CRC structures engineer, and Derek Chisholm, CRC environmental planner, reviewed project area constraints in response to a proposal by citizen Ted Buehler at a previous PBAC meeting to design a more direct path route to serve higher speed bike commuters. Ted was not in attendance at today's meeting.

Derek said the project must avoid impacts to historic properties listed or eligible for listing under section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act. We have done what we can to reduce impacts to the Fort Vancouver National Historic Reserve. We've already reduced the impact from three acres to about 1 ½ acres.

Todd attempted to clarify what he believed to be Ted's proposal. Many Vancouver bike commuters come from the Hazel Dell area, but an untapped market is the area east of I-5. Todd said he understands the need to minimize impacts, but maybe there's an opportunity with the Community Connector over I-5, which is already planned to include bike/pedestrian access. Todd suggested that the flow for bike commuters, at least to 7th St. could be facilitated.

Natalie Freeman reviewed project maps of Marine Drive and SR 14 showing constraints that make Ted's proposal infeasible. These include clearance issues, impacts to adjacent properties, and cost, among others. In addition, the path must meet grades required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Todd suggested facilitating the movement from the north to the south, then west across a 7th St. bike overpass, then south. He wondered if there areas where we can speed bike travel through traffic signal delays and at the Community Connector.

Matt Deml discussed feasibility of constructing the path. The bridge transitions from an open web box structure to another structure type.

Rod asked if it would be possible to have an elevated bikeway from the Community Connector into the covered path. Natalie said it's not possible due to the tight geometry of the SR 14 interchange.

Natalie explained how the team has done considerable due diligence and looked at over 25 design options and none were feasible.

Todd asked if staff can create a one-page memo showing you've done your due diligence. Parisi agreed.

David said staff has worked very hard to address Ted's concerns and have met with him individually. His proposal is infeasible environmentally, physically, structurally, and for other reasons. Staff have spent a lot of time doing this work, which is fine, but needs to direct staff resources into the proposal moving forward.

Update on public involvement activities

Peter Ovington, CRC communications, gave a brief update, including recent outreach events and the focus of recent public comments.

Tolling outreach has been a focus over the last several months, with project staff meeting with community and business groups in the project area and with new audiences near I-205. The online tolling survey, which has received over 4,000 responses to date, will end on Oct. 31. Public outreach related to the Vancouver and Portland light rail citizen advisory groups was discussed earlier in today's meeting by Steve Witter.

Upcoming meetings of note include the Dec. 4 CRC Project Sponsors Council and the Dec. 7 CRC Tolling Study Committee.

Discussion

Urban Design Advisory Group: Rod asked why there are no further meetings scheduled for the CRC Urban Design Advisory Group (UDAG). Walter said most of the advisory groups have reached a milestone and are at a resting point. The UDAG recommendations have been made and will help guide decisions. UDAG will regroup after value engineering is complete.

Marine Drive Stakeholder Group: This group has completed their work and made a recommendation, but Walter said many members have asked to be kept updated in order to address value engineering recommendations.

Vancouver Working Group: Seanette Corkill asked if the project is still studying a light rail alignment on 17th Street as opposed to the Vancouver Working Group's recommended route on McLoughlin Boulevard. David Parisi said the project has been asked by the City of Vancouver to look at both options and to return to City Council in December with more technical analysis of 17th Street.

Freight groups: A member asked if the project has done tolling outreach to freight groups. Peter said CRC hosted two forums for the freight community in August at the ports of Portland and Vancouver to discuss tolling and to hear feedback.

Timeline for final EIS: Todd Boulanger asked where the project is regarding a timeline for the final environmental impact statement and responses to public comments. When is the last chance for our reflection on the design that could make it into the FEIS? David Parisi said we expect the CRC Project Sponsors Council to make recommendations on the draft design refinements at their Dec. 4 meeting. A published final EIS is expected in mid-2010.

Advisory group input for design refinements: Walter Valenta asked about how advisory groups will give input into design refinements. Casey Liles said the project is trying to get one version into the final EIS, but it may not be possible. The goal is to get it as close as possible to what will be the "build" version.

Action items

Access to second bridge cell: If the main river crossing is reduced to 10 lanes and the open cell is reduced in width substantially, staff should examine the feasibility of making the second cell available to bikes and pedestrians.

Bike parking presentation: Staff and Todd Boulanger will present bike parking ideas at the December PBAC meeting.

Response to Ted Buehler's proposal: Staff will produce a one-page memo explaining why Ted's proposal is infeasible, including information about ADA compliance and grade percentage challenges.

Next meeting

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Columbia River Crossing project office
700 Washington St., Suite 300, Vancouver WA

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