

**Community and Environmental Justice Group
April Meeting**

April 19, 2007
5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Kenton Firehouse
2209 N. Schofield St.
Portland, OR 97217

Agenda

Meeting Objectives:

- Update on March Task Force meeting outcomes
- Update on actions items from March CEJG meeting
- Continue presentation, answer questions and review NEPA process
- Determine future agenda items

Dinner	5:30 p.m.
Welcome, introductions and announcements	6:00 p.m.
Review meeting purpose and draft agenda	6:05 p.m.
Update on March meeting action items	6:10 p.m.
Discuss outcomes of Task Force subcommittee to date	6:20 p.m.
Continue NEPA process review	6:35 p.m.
- Brief review of material covered and questions from last meeting	
- Review public involvement, agency and tribal involvement	
Public Comment	8:15 p.m.
Propose future agenda items, review action items & next steps	8:20 p.m.
Closing and Next Meeting Reminder	8:30 p.m.

Meeting: Community and Environmental Justice Group

Date: Thursday, March 15, 2007

Location: Kenton Firehouse, 2209 N. Schofield St., Portland, OR

Members Present

Diana Avalos

John Benson

Jonath Colón-Montesi

Ed Garren

Dave Frei

Kris Long

Dave Skagen

Michelle Tworoger

Marcia Ward

Nikki Williams

Matt Whitney

Members Absent

Anne McEnery-Ogle

Connie Sherrard

CRC Staff Present

Jeff Heilman

Danielle Cogan

Heather Gundersen

Nanci Luna Jiménez

Barbara MacKay

Rangineh Azimzadeh

CRC Staff Absent

Doug Ficco

Kris Strickler

Guests Present

Jeri Williams

Isael

Leslie Howell- *Howell Consulting*

Introductions

Group members, staff and visitors were asked to state their names, neighborhood(s) they represent and a sentence about why they were at the meeting.

Dave Frei – (West Vancouver)

- I'm the liaison to the Task Force.

Danielle Cogan – CRC Communications Manager (SE Portland)

- Here to help run the CEJG Group.

Heather Gundersen – (NW Portland)

Rangineh Azimzadeh – (North Portland)

- "Here as part of the facilitation team."

Dave Skagen – ("K" St. and Rose Village)

- “I’m the guy with the sign.”
Leslie Howell – Consultant Team
- “Here to see the important work the group is doing.”
Diana Avalos – (North Clark County)
- “I am a liaison to Latino community and I’m glad to be back.”
Michelle Tworoger – (Jantzen Beach Floating Home Community)
- Jantzen Beach Moorage Board of Directors
Nikki Williams – (North Portland)
- I’m a community member.
Marcia ward – (Vancouver)
- Jeri Williams – Office of Neighborhood Involvement, City of Portland
- “Really appreciate all of you and the group did a great job on the presentation to the Task Force. I’m here to help or for advice and keep up the good work.”
Kris Long – (Vancouver)
- Ed Garren – (Hayden Island)
- “Newly elected Chair of High Noon (Hayden Island Neighborhood Association); pleased and honored to be a part of this group.”
Matt Whitney – Chair of Bridgeton Neighborhood
- “This is my 2nd meeting here, thank you for inviting me.”
John Benson – (Piedmont Neighborhood)
- Jeff Heilman – CRC project Team; Environmental Management
- Barb Mackay – Luna Jiménez Seminars & Associates Facilitation Team (Beaverton)
- “Have been to all but one meeting.”
Nanci Luna Jiménez – Facilitator (North Portland)
- “I have the honor of facilitating this meeting once a month.”
Jonath Colon-Montesi – Small Business Owner (North Portland)
- Isael – (Unknown)
- “Here to visit again.”

Review of Meeting Objectives

February 2007 Task Force Meeting Debrief

Members that attended the Task Force meeting in February were asked to name one thing that stood out from the meeting. The majority of the comments expressed a general sense of astonishment regarding the number of public comments that were made. Dave Frei, CEJG Liaison to the Task Force, commented that he believed environmental justice was now on the minds of the Task Force members as a result.

What about the Task Force meeting stood out for you?

- Dave F. – “A lot of public comments; lots of passion. It was a really good turn out.”
- Marcia – “Public comment really stood out for me.”
- Jeff – “I remember going into the meeting not sure how it would turn out because there was a lot of concern about the staff recommendation; Task Force had a lot to absorb in the meeting. I was really happy with the result.”
- Heather – “There weren’t very many Vancouver residents that stood up and did public comment, it was mainly Portland folks.”
- Danielle – “Interesting thing about public comment was that people were talking about the next phase of the project; project needs to better explain the

implications of each stage. It was an opportunity for the project to learn how to better explain each phase of the project.”

- Marcia – “There were several people from Lewis and Clark and they talked about EJ, it surprised me since I haven’t seen those same people at the CEJG meetings.”

What kind of impact do you think the CEJG had at the meeting?

- Dave F. – “I think CEJG was asking questions that the process weren’t ready to answer. I think EJ is now on the minds of the Task Force members, they are some key people that I think are strong supporters. Good outcome was that we were able to ask questions on a broad enough scale. I feel the 4th alternative will give us an even broader look.”

Review of Task Force Meeting Outcomes

Danielle Cogan gave a brief summary of the meeting outcomes noting that the highlight was the acceptance of the staff recommendation and the forming of a new subcommittee, members of which were selected by the chair. The purpose of the subcommittee is to study a new 4th alternative and to do enough research to see whether it meets the purpose and need of the project and can remain low cost. Danielle also mentioned that the subcommittee would be supported by the CRC project staff through feedback and technical support in order to help them meet the purpose and need of the project. The subcommittee is scheduled to present their findings at the next Task Force meeting on March 27, 2007. The Task Force will decide at that time whether or not to accept the 4th Alternative and add it to the DEIS. ***See related comments below***

- Ed – “When they combine all of this into one proposal, would it be possible to email us the link for the final product?”
- Dave F. – “If they accept this 4th alternative, it doesn’t necessarily mean it will make it to the final stages. It will still need to be examined the same way as the others.”
- Michelle – “Why is Sharon Naset’s proposal not being considered?”

Announcements

- 4th Alternative Task Force Subcommittee meeting schedule.
- Environmental Justice conference being held at Lewis & Clark College on Saturday, March 17, 2007.
- A request was made by Nanci Luna Jiménez to have the member recruitment discussion tabled until the next meeting due to time constraints. This was followed by a request from Danielle to have the discussion off-line and that she would contact CEJG members via email and/or phone.
- The formation of some new groups. One of the first groups to be created is the Urban Design Advisory Group. The **Urban Design Advisory Group** is one of several groups to form in order to better engage community members. Michelle Tworoger and Marcia Ward are both participants in the newly founded Urban Design Advisory Group.
- Another advisory group likely to be created in the near future is a Bike/Ped Group, which CEJG member Matt Whitney showed interest in joining.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Presentation

Heather Gundersen – Environmental Manager, Columbia River Crossing project
Heather started the presentation by stating that her presentation intended to decipher the difference between what is and isn't NEPA. She followed up by asking the group what they thought NEPA was. In response, there were several questions around wanting to know what NEPA required and requests to gather more information about the process and history.

Heather provided some history of how NEPA came to exist. She went on to say that before NEPA, public notice was the beginning of construction and that there was no real public process. One of the main things NEPA did was it incorporated consideration of environmental impacts in federal decision making. It requires full disclosure of environmental impacts and is a way to hold federal agencies accountable and engage the public. NEPA requires that projects coordinate with other laws that are more substantive than the NEPA process. NEPA process overview:

- Federal agency proposes an action (there has to be a federal nexus)
- Determine if there will be significant impacts
- If impacts are not clear, an environmental assessment is conducted and if nothing is found then it will be considered a FONSI (Finding Of No Significant Impact) *Significant meaning greater than a reasonable chance of having a moderate impact.
- If impacts are clear, then it goes straight to Environmental Impact Statement

She mentioned that an EIS is what is being done for the CRC Project and that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Process overview is guided by the following steps:

- Filing of notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement
- Development of project purpose and need statement (Does it solve the problem?)
- Public scoping meetings
 - Public input occurs at this stage
 - Difficult to engage the public because the problem is still very conceptual
- Environmental Impact Studies
- Release of draft of Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)
- Formal comment period and public hearings
- Selection of locally preferred alternative (LPA)
- Publication of Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
- Filing of Record of Decision (ROD)
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Heather concluded her presentation by noting that all throughout the process an administrative record is kept for legal purposes. Following the presentation, the group was asked if they had any questions. Comments ranged from positive feedback with regard to NEPA to questions about the purpose of the process and whether or not it makes a difference. The group was also asked which of them had been through the DEIS process and how the experience was for them. When reflecting on what stood out, comments were made regarding the large amount of documentation that was involved and that there was a significant amount of public comment submitted that was not expected. Other comments asserted that the NEPA statement was in fact a good characterization of impacts and that the ability for the public to make comment and be involved was important. Community members were also asked to share any advice they had for those that had not been through the process yet. Comments included remembering to be patient and that because the process is an educational one, people need to remember to learn from each other throughout the process.

NEPA Presentation- Questions and Comments

- Ed – “Does the process look at impacts including construction? Does it look at changes to the environment after the project is complete?”
- Kris – “Can you give me an example of a project that doesn’t have an environmental impact?”
- Michelle – “If there are impacts, they still move forward so what is the point of the process?”
- Dave F. – “It provides community members with the knowledge and opportunity to rally if they know they will be affected. It provides an opportunity for discussion.”
- Ed – “It’s how we were able to get a moratorium on Hayden Island.”
- Danielle – I just want to say that this is still the beginning and these are great questions because as we get further into the project we will be able to come back to some of these.
- Ed – In your report back, you have to specify all the things you did to meet the full disclosure aspect, its parallel to fair employment.
- Matt – “Have all the public comments that have been taken been compiled? So are we into the Environmental Impact Studies phase?”
- Danielle – When do we move into the next phase?

- Dave F. – “I see it as taking a project and seeing how it affects the environment and how will it impact lives.”
- Ed – “What would be helpful is to explain the processes that NEPA requires.”
- Matt – “It’s helpful to know why something like NEPA came along.”

Who has been through a DEIS and what stood out?

- Ed – Project that comes to mind is the Gateway in West Hollywood. Lots of information was gathered and compiled. They got a lot of information they didn’t expect but ended up doing what they wanted anyways.
- John – Finding out what are the concerns that directly relate to the environmental concerns in the NEPA statement. When all was done, NEPA statement was a good characterization of impacts. It was a cumbersome process but the end result was good.
- Kris – It took “forever” and at times thought “What’s the point?” but appreciated being able to comment. Found how naïve I was and it was very educational; amazed at how hard staff worked.

What would you want those who have not gone through DEIS to know?

- Michelle – “Be patient.”
- Jonath – “You are educating yourself as well as those around you and you have to learn from each other.”
- Public involvement – keep talking to each other.

What would you have liked to have known?

- *Dave F.* – Would have spent a lot more time thinking through purpose and need.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Presentation

Jeff Heilman – Columbia River Crossing project

Jeff began his presentation by stating that there are several purposes for DEIS, one of which is the law. He went on to highlight the importance of covering the legal requirements while still allowing it to be accessible to the public. One goal is to make the trade offs clear to the all the stakeholders. DEIS serves as a venue/medium to the public. Jeff went on to discuss what a DEIS consists of and listed the following characteristics:

- Description of the alternatives (anything visual that clarifies)
- Descriptions of the operations
- Environmental Information (what are the environmental impacts?)
- Impacts
- Potential Mitigation
- Cost (cost/benefit analysis)
- Finances (how will the project be funded?)
- Description of the coordination

He mentioned the information is gathered from sources such as aerial photos, existing reports and studies, inventories (i.e. field studies) and public and agency input. The next step is impacts. Jeff asked how impacts should be evaluated and followed-up by saying that impacts have to be carefully assessed whether they are in the long or short term.

Designs are overlaid on aerial maps and photos to better determine affects. Effects are then taken and assessed with several different types of impacts being reviewed. Some of the different impacts include: long term impacts (i.e. traffic, congestion, etc.), short term impacts (i.e. construction, off road equipment, diesel emissions, etc.), direct impacts (i.e. relocation of a house), indirect (or induced) impacts (i.e. affects on people's choices regarding where to live a result of traffic patterns that change due to the project), and cumulative impacts (looks at impacts of your project and impacts of past projects and impacts of future projects). He explained what it meant to have a significant impact by stating that a belief exists that if a project has a significant impact that it cannot or will not move forward but that this is false. The importance of fully disclosing the significance of the impact(s) was also underlined. Once impacts have been identified, it's important to look at if and how impacts can be mitigated. Jeff concluded by saying that there are specific legal requirements within mitigation, such as the Federal Relocation Assistance Act and agency regulations and guidelines, and that if regulations don't exist around mitigation then NEPA becomes the guideline.

Jeff's presentation will be continued next week because the meeting was almost over. CEJG members were asked to write down their questions on a piece of paper and give them to Jeff to review. It was agreed that the next meeting would begin with Jeff's presentation and that he would address the questions at that time.

Questions for next DEIS presentation

- When will the federal relocation program be discussed with impacted families?
- When will the mitigation for displacements begin and how do we know it will be fair?
- What is the value of making public comments, other than it being documented?
- What types of preliminary findings will be shared with the CEJG prior to issuing the DEIS?
- Dave S. – “Want to see something in black and white; what is the air quality now?”
- Ed – “This group wants mentioned that we want measurement of air quality – that this be the methodology vs. just monitoring.”

Action Items

- Danielle will post meeting dates and locations, how to get there by public transportation, meeting agendas and meeting notes online by end of April (goal is April 16th)
- Danielle will email link to subcommittee's final finding as soon as the findings go on the website (no later than March 27th)
- Danielle will contact people in Kenton and other neighborhoods off-line and get input from CEJG before April 19th
- Dave Skagen will invite the president of Rose Village for the April 19th meeting
- Danielle will find out and let the CEJG members know via email if others will be allowed to attend and how public involvement will happen at the Urban Design Advisory Group meeting (email due out by March 23rd)
- Nanci will start the April 19th meeting with Jeff's presentation
- Danielle will re-send meetings dates by March 23rd

Current Alternatives Under Study

The Columbia River Crossing project is studying two bridge options and two transit options in a process to identify the best combination of options that improve mobility and safety and decrease congestion in the five-mile project area. The result of this study will be a report called a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which is required under federal guidelines.

In late 2006, the project staff recommended one bridge option and two transit options move forward for further analysis. An additional bridge option was added in March 2007 as a result of the Task Force's recommendation.

The bridge and transit options have been packaged into four different alternatives. The CRC project team is working to define and refine the details of the alternatives to allow additional study and analysis and complete the DEIS. Results of the analyses will be available for public comment in late 2007. A formal public comment period is expected in the spring of 2008 on the selection of one alternative.

A Brief Overview of the Alternatives:

Replacement Bridge with Bus Rapid Transit

The Interstate Bridge would be replaced with a new bridge with five or six lanes in each direction. The new bridge also would have a lane for bus rapid transit.

Replacement Bridge with Light Rail

The Interstate Bridge would be replaced with a new bridge with five or six lanes in each direction. The new bridge also would have a lane for light rail.

Supplemental Bridge with High Capacity Transit

The existing Interstate Bridge would be re-striped into four lanes with wider shoulders for northbound traffic. A new bridge would be built to carry southbound traffic and High Capacity Transit (either bus rapid transit or light rail).

No Build

A No Build alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and serves as a baseline for comparison with other alternatives. The existing Interstate Bridge and public transit systems would remain. Only improvements reasonably anticipated for funding and construction in the Metro and Southwest Washington regional transportation plans would be considered.

As part of the DEIS process, the following issues will be addressed in each of the “build” alternatives. The alternatives will then be rigorously analyzed to determine their ability to solve the congestion, safety and mobility problems defined for I-5.

Issues to be Addressed in the DEIS

- Public transit – route, stations, and park and ride locations
- Freight improvements – at interchanges for connections and safety
- Efficiencies – ideas like ramp meters, incident response, ridesharing and telecommuting
- Bicycle and pedestrian improvements
- Air quality and noise reduction
- Environmental effects – water quality issues
- Cultural and historical resource protection
- HOV lanes
- Tolling
- Bridge type, appearance, and alignment (upstream or downstream)



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