

SR 432 Realignment Feasibility Study

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Meeting Summary #3

Meeting Date: June 12, 2007

Location: Port of Longview (POL), Longview WA

Attendees: *Technical Advisory Committee Meeting*

Gerald Smith – David Evans and Associates, Inc. (DEA), Consultant/Project Manager

Neal Christensen - DEA, Consultant

Eric Lyman – Mainline Management, Inc.

Dave Hatzenbuhler – Mainline Management, Inc.

Bob Patton – Mainline Management, Inc.

Patrick Lynch - Transpo, Inc.

Wassim Kebab - Transpo, Inc.

Rosemary Siipola – CWCOG, Transportation Planner/Manager

Karyn Anderson – WSDOT Southwest Region, Project Manager

Kirk Fredrickson – WSDOT HQ Rail Office

Jonathan Abuyan – WSDOT Southwest Region, Traffic Office

Jeff Barsness – WSDOT Southwest Region, Planning Office Lead

Sreenath Gangula – WSDOT Southwest Region, Transportation Planner/Modeler

George Cress – Port of Longview, Planning and Development

John Bean – City of Longview, Engineer

Amy Hamlin - CWCOG, Transportation Planning

Chet Makinster – Swanson Bark and Wood

Jennifer Taylor – WSDOT Environmental Office

Darlene Sharar – WSDOT Engineering Services – Access Management

Steve Harvey – CWCOG, Director

Gary Lindstrom – Port of Longview

Valerie Harris – Port of Longview

**Welcome and
Introductions
CWCOG,
DEA &
WSDOT**

Rosemary Siipola, Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG), thanked everyone for driving out to the Port of Longview facilities for our third SR 432 Realignment Feasibility Study Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting, introduced herself to the group and then introduced Karyn Anderson, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Karyn thanked everyone for coming to today's meeting and taking time out of their busy schedules. She mentioned that this should be an informative meeting, that there has been a lot of work occurring behind the scenes, and that the group would be viewing power point presentations and modeling simulations. She also commented on the tremendous turn out and the enormity of the project (port officials, city, county, state, David Evans & associates

(DEA), Transpo, Mainline management, etc.) Rosemary, than introduced Gerry Smith with David Evans and Associates (DEA), the consultant hired to manage the project.

**DEA Meeting
Kick-Off
Self
Introductions,
Stakeholder
Interviews and
Modeling
Update**

Gerry, thanked everyone for coming, covered a few general house keeping items and opened the floor to self introductions. After introductions, Gerry gave a brief update regarding the agenda for today's meeting and began to provide an update regarding the recently completed stakeholder interviews.

As mentioned at the first TAC meeting, the Project Management Team (PMT) had created a questionnaire to conduct interviews with stakeholders along the corridor. Its' main purpose, to gather valuable information about the types of commodities being shipped; volumes shipped by rail and by truck, and expected growth in all traffic by 2030.

The questionnaire would also help the PMT gather information including (but not limited to) the type of the businesses located along the corridor, manufacturing or shipping information, business hours, volumes (current/expected), operational concerns, rail services, and any foreseen changes in growth and service.

Gerry shared the list of stakeholders that had been interviewed to date at the second TAC meeting. (See TAC meeting summary #2) Gerry explained that DEA conducted the formal interviews and BST Associates/Brian Winningham completed the phone interviews. A final report will be available over the next couple of weeks and that they are on budget but, slightly behind schedule.

Gerry mentioned that Mainline Management and Transpo were present to share with the group the highway and rail model simulations for the area and that many of the concerns heard during the stakeholder interview process was regarding highway and rail concerns, truck growth, rail growth and mode choice information. Gerry mentioned the rail carload traffic is at .8 and 1.8% increase per year and traffic is at 1.6 to 3.0% increase per year. He pointed out that the percentage will change if the unit train activity information gathered, during the stakeholder interview process, occurs. He described that the growth would spike, then level out slightly, and then repeat.

**Mainline
Management
Power Point
Presentation
and Rail
Simulation**

Eric Lyman, David Hatzenbuhler and Bob Patton, from Mainline Management, Inc., began their power point presentation. Eric narrated during the slide show presentation and started off with describing their goal to quantify effects of projected rail growth on SR 432 grade crossings and impact on rail traffic fluidity. (Power point presentation available on the project website) Eric described the following throughout the power point presentation:

- That the growth impact was analyzed by simulating the mainline and local rail traffic between Vancouver Junction and Vader.
- This included detailed local operations between Longview Junction and multiple industries within Longview.
- Modeling results were used to analyze rail fluidity and to develop input for the highway traffic model.

- Longview Switching Company (LSC), Columbia and Cowlitz Railroad (CLC), Port of Longview (POL) and local industries were interviewed to better understand current operations and the potential for growth in the area
- They received current data when trains left the yard (a 3 week sample) and all information (included stakeholder information data) is in the model.
- Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) model used for simulation (BNSF data, used from the 2005 Rail study, is included along with Union Pacific and Amtrak).
- Amtrak growth schedules provided by BNSF.
- No main line freight growth.
- Train routing uncertainty with Stampede Pass, Vancouver Bypass projects still under review.
- Local switch engine/industry volumes developed from industry projections or estimated at 1 – 1.5% compounded annually (Increased size, frequency of local movements).
- Unit train information is based on Port and industry projections (Combined 14 trains/week to Longview industries).
- The RTC model covers the base case from the Longview Switching Company, BNSF and the stakeholder interviews in the area.
- The 2030 model included the added projected growth projections, modified LSC and CLC operations based on work requirements and interviews, minor mainline infrastructure improvements (CTC auto switching-Kalama improvements), and the loop track at the Port of Longview for unit trains was the only infrastructure improvement for the industrial area.
- That impact on rail fluidity at the Longview Junction occurs; it is an 8 mile segment of mainline where trains are stopped at the Longview Junction.
- 2007 Delays exceeding 30 minutes with hand thrown switching.
- 2007 and 2030 case comparison and minutes delay comparison presented (on pie charts).
- That major delay locations or pinch points are at the single track bridge creating 1 to 3 hours of delay, at the switching lead/running track created delays of .5 to 1 hour in duration, and north/south crossing and yard entrance created delays of .5 to 2.5 hours
- Eric pointed out to the group that Amtrak trains (passenger trains) get preference over all freight trains moving through the area. The model showed several Amtrak trains coming through on the second line, while several freight trains had to stop in the Longview Junction area or on the main line depending on the direction they were heading
- The impact on grade crossings (presentation) and the final results important to highway traffic.
- That unit trains would most likely come through the corridor, when Amtrak isn't coming through the area. (i.e. noon or late in the evening)

Kirk Frederickson, WSDOT Rail Office, asked about the assumptions regarding growth without factoring in the development that would be needed to support that growth. He referenced the Kelso-to-Martin's Bluff project and that it is estimated at 400 million

dollars and explained that only 50 million had been secured for the project. Kirk then asked Eric, how they could make these assumptions? Darlene Sharar, WSDOT Access Management, asked if it was different than how we currently look at the highway?

Gerry explained that the modeling information they've gathered from the stakeholders/businesses, and a list of improvements and costs necessary to sustain the development, would be necessary for any growth assumptions. And, that improvements and time schedules with the Kelso-to-Martin's Bluff project would need to be coordinated with this project. Many of the recommendations (i.e. a third main line) should definitely be considered/recommended for continuity/connectivity. Gerry also mentioned that we'll know more about where we're headed after more discussions occur during this meeting.

Jeff Barsness, WSDOT Planning, then asked about other peak hours in the area, if they existed and if so, how would they affect the model? Rosemary Siipola, CWCOG, mentioned that this would be a great question to ask Transpo during their presentation, especially given that there is a peak period for trucking between 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the study area.

Eric Lyman, Mainline Management, resumed the power point presentation and explained, during the simulation, that a third line should be considered at the Longview Junction to alleviate rail congestion. Gerry stated that a second bridge over the river with an additional lead to the bridge could also alleviate some of the rail congestion. Many attendees agreed simultaneously during this discussion: that a third rail line for movement of trains north and south would serve the Longview Junction area, and would keep the I-5 traffic from Seattle to Portland flowing smoothly; a second bridge over the Cowlitz River; and the improvement of adding the additional lead. Other discussion involved:

- David Hatzenbuhler, Mainline Management, described that the projections show one or two unit trains a day and that mitigation and modest improvements will need to be a consideration.
- John Bean, City of Longview, asked if they would be “ramping-up” for improvements based on the 14 train projection in the 2030 limited growth case mentioned in their presentation.
- David Hatzenbuhler stated they could look at critical times during the day, and maybe additional improvements. In addition, the 2030 “full growth” case will require mainline track improvements to handle more than the 14 round trip unit trains in the 2030 “limited growth” case.
- Rosemary commented on the development at the Mint Farm and the trains projected for that area. Eric stated that CLC trash trains were accounted for in the model.

TRANSPO Power Point Presentation and Highway Simulation

Gerry introduced Patrick Lynch and Wassim Kebab, from Transpo, Inc., both were in attendance to present the highway model. Patrick described that they would be presenting the 2007 base model with and without train interruption within the corridor. He explained that they were using Vissim Software, which is micro-level software that looks at the operations and vehicle movements within the corridor. Patrick also explained that they planned to show existing conditions first and than existing conditions with one peak hour unit train. Patrick described the following throughout their presentation:

- That they used traffic counts and travel time which represented Level of Service and operations.
- They used existing traffic counts and drove the corridor with a GPS unit. This allowed them to account for accumulative delay which helps the “what-if” scenarios and makes it more realistic. They drove from 3rd to 38th with the GPS unit.
- That the model simulations in the corridor include 7,500 ft. unit trains (based on the proposed ethanol plant and stakeholder interviews).
- The unit trains will block all intersections when a unit train was in the area. Blocking Industrial Way, California Way, Third Avenue out to Oregon Way, between 2 and 9 minutes in duration.
- The amount of back up simulated showed that once the unit train cleared an intersection, the corridor did not recover immediately.
- The simulation shows that as the unit train clears a signal within the corridor and the signal turns green at that intersection, the traffic will move to the next intersection that the unit train hasn’t cleared. Thus, creating a traffic jam.
- Comments made that unit trains should not move along this corridor (the Reynolds lead) by TAC members.
- That the model shows rail situations that need to be addressed and that the “bypass option” is not feasible. It “doesn’t do it”. Possibly, there needs to an interchange at Oregon Way as well.

TAC member discussion revolved around the potential for developer mitigation and the responsibility at the planning/policy level. Comments were made by TAC members that this shouldn’t be allowed to occur, now that the group had seen visually what it would do to the system. Gerry commented that he’d address all of these issues/potential solutions in the funding chapter, i.e. “how to address mitigation with developers and impacts”. Gerry also mentioned that they’ll look at signal timing/coordination and grade separation.

George Cress, Port of Longview, added that it’s important to consider also the impact that this will have on response times for emergency vehicles.

**DEA
Intersection
Improvement/
Synchro
Analysis**

Gerry, than turned the discussion over to Neal Christensen, DEA, to describe the analysis work they were performing. As mentioned at the last TAC meeting, Neal shared that DEA was moving forward regarding mapping and exhibit work that would show intersection improvements at the 12 intersections DEA agreed to provide Synchro Analysis. (Intersections outlined in TAC meeting summary # 2 – available on the project website)

Neal commented that they'd also been studying the bypass issue. At this point, DEA is still refining the bypass option, but the area in general has poor soil conditions and the alignment in general will be very challenging. This option may turn out to be cost prohibitive. Another potential option is a frontage road by the businesses which would be a lower cost alternative.

Improving access management to allow better access, for instance, a one-way access road, may also be a better low cost, nearer-term solution. The idea of realigning California Way and Industrial Way to allow for better sight distance and to improve safety may also be feasible. Darlene, agreed that access control in the corridor would be necessary/a good solution.

**Project
Schedule,
wrap-up and
Next Meeting
Date**

Gerry began to wrap up the meeting, expressed that DEA was slightly behind schedule, but on budget. He thanked everyone for coming and providing their valuable input. He mentioned that Karyn has been maintaining the project website. (The project web site is: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/SR432/RailStudy/>) Karyn commented that it was currently up to date, as of our last TAC meeting. Karyn also mentioned that the Project Management Team would be working to summarize what was heard today. They will capture the information presented by Transpo and Mainline Management, TAC member comments and recommendations from today's meeting. Karyn also asked for electronic versions of the power point presentations presented at the meeting and will include them on the project website. Mainline Management commented that they'd already forwarded a copy to DEA and that Transpo would forward a copy of their presentation to DEA too.

Gerry again, thanked everyone for coming and thanked the Port of Longview for hosting the meeting. The next Technical Advisory Committee meeting will be on August 14th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (meeting location to be determined)