Point Defiance Bypass Project Technical Advisory Team – Meeting Notes

Date: **July 15, 2010**

Attendees: Dave Bugher, City of Lakewood
Jeff Gonzalez, City of Lakewood
Mike Galizio, Pierce County
Bruce Gordon, Clover Park School District
Steve Kim, WSDOT
Larry Mickel, JBLM
Minh Vo, Camp Murray
Peter Zahn, City of Dupont
WSDOT Project Team: Melanie Coon, Chris Dunster, Myria Foisy, Kevin Jeffers, Dianna Lahmann, Larry Mattson, David Smelser

Project Overview - Past, present and future

Program Business Manager Chris Dunster kicked off the meeting by introducing Larry Mattson who will lead the Environmental Assessment process for WSDOT. Larry talked a little about his experience with the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East project documentation. He bridged to the Point Defiance proejct, providing an overview of work completed, activities underway and priorities for next steps in this process.

Project Engineer Kevin Jeffers took committee members back in time, reviewing the history and evolution of the Prairie Line, the American Lake Line and the Point Defiance Line.

Environmental Assessment Process

Mattson overviewed reports and resources that we will tap into as we go through this process. We'll look back at studies done during the first EA, but we'll also leverage new information that has been published since that time.

Mattson summarized the scoping letter comments received back from the communities and surveyed the group for any additional items and issues that needed to be captured. The ideas were written down on a flip chart.

Questions and discussion from the committee:

Q: Have you identified the timing of the public comment period?

A: The timing of the public comment period will depend on how quickly we can get through the review process towards a recommendation to the exec committee. We hope to have a ballpark idea by our next technical committee meeting.

Q: Is the purpose of this team to provide technical feedback on reports before they are sent for public comment?

A: The core purpose of this team is to ensure a detailed review of what was studied in the past and to thoroughly explore mitigation options based on updated information. Comments from our stakeholders are a key component of this. We would like to demonstrate to the public that we have all worked together, thoroughly vetted the options, and reached a consensus. Mattson: It was helpful in the past to sit down with all the stakeholders and their marked up documentation and go through each of their concerns. When we reach that point in this process, we would like to do that again.

Q: At what point will this group be involved in talking about alternatives?
A. WSDOT is committed to fully exploring the whole range of alternatives in this process. Different options were identified in prior environmental documentation, and we are tasked with vetting those in greater detail. We'll make sure alternatives that were viable several years ago still make sense. We will take a holistic approach. We should have some alternatives for the group by September.

Q: Are there white paper/photos/videos that can frame the mitigation concepts?
A. WSDOT is pulling together conceptual visuals showing the types of trains, crossings, typical crossing issues, how current road traffic engages with trains through this area, etc. We will have something for the next meeting. Larry Mickel from Joint Base Lewis McChord committed to helping WSDOT with access issues on the track near the base in order to perform more assessments.

Q: Are the plan sheets given to us still valid?
A: Yes, but they are working documents.

Q: What happens if we don't have a contract by the end of September 2017?
A: We are committed to delivering the service outcomes outlined in our grant application and are working hard to move this project forward. If we have to consider a contingency option, we will work with FRA to identify and move forward alternate projects that help us still accomplish our promised service outcomes.

Mitigation Options

Mattson distributed a worksheet containing a matrix of mitigation options. Each option will be reviewed and evaluated. In August, WSDOT's David Smelser will lead the group through a weighting exercise for the mitigation options. The weighting exercise has been used with success on projects with multiple variables and competing values, as part of value engineering studies.

Items captured on the flip chart

Mitigation Options/Concerns:

- Public education campaign
- Grade separation
    - Berkeley
    - Thorne Lane
    - 41st Division
- Short-term construction impacts

- Emergency communication/response plans
- Bike/pedestrian concerns – specifically, school district funding may be impacted based on safe routes to/from schools

Next Steps

Chris Dunster concluded the meeting and announced the next technical committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday July 29. We are looking for a better location to hold these meetings. In September, we will try to start meeting monthly.