

SR 432 Realignment Feasibility Study

Stakeholder Committee

Meeting #3

Meeting Date: December 4, 2007

Location: Kelso Area Engineering Office, Kelso Washington

Attendees: *Stakeholder Committee Attendees*

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

Neal Christensen - DEA, Consultant

Karyn Anderson – WSDOT Southwest Region, Planning

Rosemary Siipola – CWCOG, Transportation Planner/Manager

Jeff Barsness – WSDOT Southwest Region, Planning Office Lead

Denys Tak – WSDOT Southwest Region, Kelso AE

George Cress – Port of Longview, Planning and Development

Gail Barber – Swanson Bark and Wood

John Bean – City of Longview

Dave Campbell – City of Longview

**Welcome and
Introductions
CWCOG,
WSDOT**

Rosemary Siipola, Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) opened the meeting, thanked everyone for attending our third SR 432 Realignment Feasibility Study Stakeholder Committee meeting, began to briefly describe the study progress, introduced herself and Karyn Anderson with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and then opened the floor for self-introductions.

**DEA
Introductions,
The Study**

Gerry Smith, David Evans & Associates (DEA) thanked everyone for coming and began to brief the stakeholder committee regarding the study progress and findings. Gerry reminded the group, that the Project Management Team (PMT) was reevaluating and updating the 2001 Route Development Plan recommendations. That DEA analyzed all recommended projects from 2001, changed as required by 2007 conditions and the feasibility of construction with the new geotechnical data made available. In addition to gathering data, public input provided by the Stakeholder Committee, Technical Advisory Committee and through Stakeholder Interviews was extremely beneficial in the analysis. Gerry explained that they learned through the Stakeholder Interviews, the stakeholder's needs, how they shipped their products, and how they expected to grow.

This information, along with the commodity modeling, supplemented what was learned from the Stakeholder Interviews. Gerry explained that the commodity information for SR 432 Corridor, Rail Capacity Analysis and the recent University of Washington,

Forest Product Study, are all in agreement. The study findings have been confirmed with these other studies and gave the team a good understanding of how growth will occur in the study area.

Gerry explained that these growth factors were then used in the modeling. The growth in carload rail traffic is 1 to 1.5 percent. Unit trains in the area are a big difference when compared to the 2001 RDP. The truck traffic is 2 % per year, normal growth in the area has been 1.5 for car traffic. As a result of stakeholder interviews, the truck traffic is 2% per year. A recent AASHTO document for reauthorization quotes FHWA traffic growth for the nation over the next 20 years at 2.07 % per year. Gerry reiterated that it was satisfying that the study findings seem to be confirmed by work done by the University of Washington and others.

Rail Findings and Recommendations

Gerry described that the rail modeling and simulations were completed. That they used base case (2007 baseline), base case plus some growth, no improvements and 2030 with projected growth and improvements. The major findings learned during this analysis was that the stakeholder interviews pointed out one very important difference in the assumptions required in this study, versus those used in 2001. The type of industrial growth being planned today indicates a move toward rail for both in-bound and out-bound products, particularly an interest in unit train operations. In 2001, the expectation was more toward high tech industry served by trucks.

Also during the 2001 study, there was little need seen to continue the Reynolds rail lead if the Alternate Rail Corridor was to be constructed. The Alternate Rail Corridor, now called the Industrial Rail Corridor, was constructed; but stakeholder plans today indicate the Reynolds lead needs to stay in place to handle switching and local freight, while the Industrial Rail Corridor needs to be extended west of Oregon Way to handle expected growth in unit trains. This change indicates a need to preserve the Reynolds lead, which then makes the by-pass, suggested in the 2001 study, much more difficult to build.

The by-pass option was to be located where the Reynolds lead is currently. With the rail in place there is little room for the by-pass between the rail and the diking district ditch. Locating the by-pass between the rail and the ditch would involve major impacts to both. The by-pass would need to be elevated for its full length and because of very unstable soils in that vicinity makes this option an extremely expensive improvement.

The team looked at the design of the viaduct/bypass option. Traffic planning indicates the by-pass would serve the purpose of diverting traffic, especially trucks, from the existing Industrial Way. However, the feasibility of construction because of planned industrial rail growth, right-of-way needs, difficult foundation soils, and high cost is questionable and therefore the bypass option is not recommended in this feasibility study.

Gerry than described the rail improvements needed, improvements assumed on the mainline, and the order of magnitude costs. Rail improvements needed along with associated conceptual costs are as follows:

- Extend the Industrial Rail Corridor westerly across Oregon Way (new connection to Reynolds Lead) -Conceptual Cost \$4,700,000

The need for this project depends nearly entirely on the beginning of unit train service west of Oregon Way; stakeholders indicate three to five years. If unit train service does not materialize, then this project will not be needed. Minor improvements to the existing leads and switching yards will handle future carload traffic and switching.

- Longview Junction Bypass -Conceptual Cost \$5,000,000

This project is also dependent on the growth of unit train traffic. Absent unit train traffic west of Oregon Way, this project will be needed to serve unit train customers in the Port of Longview as volumes grow. The bypass or “runaround” allows traffic destined across the Cowlitz River from Longview Junction Yard if switching or pick-up/drop-off is not required.

- Parallel Industrial Rail Corridor Route (third track on IRC) Conceptual Cost \$8,100,000

This project is also dependent on unit train increases, but carload traffic to the Port of Longview could create a need if the volumes are significant.

- Second Cowlitz River Bridge -Conceptual Cost \$36,000,000

This project has been listed last, but the need is entirely driven by service demand in the SR 432 Corridor. Longview Switching Company operations sometimes block this bridge today. As rail service grows, this conflict will cause intolerable delays.

Gerry added that the main line rail improvement projects included in WSDOT’s long-range plan for intercity passenger rail are essential to freight rail service in the area. The projects are assumed to be constructed in the 2030 network. Only one of these projects has partial funding. The rest are unfunded. The projects are:

Ostrander to Winlock Third and Fourth Main Line Track
Kelso-Martins’ Bluff Rail Project
Woodland Siding
Woodland Crossover
Felida Third Main Line
Felida Crossover

George Cress, Port of Longview, asked if UP and BN were on board with these rail improvements. Gerry responded that BN understands the importance and has an economic interest. Rosemary commented the BP (Lee Stoltenow) is very interested and excited about Chinook Ventures as a huge customer. Gerry commented that at the Transportation Meeting, Lee commented that the information being gathered in this study will help them with their long range plans.

Highway Findings, Recommendations and Modeling Discussion

Gerry turned this discussion over to Neal Christensen, with DEA, to describe the highway improvements and demonstrate the modeling. Neal explained that the modeling is 2007 existing traffic (using CWCOG existing model), 2007 with (1) peak hour unit train, 2030 without improvements and 2030 with improvements.

Neal shared with the group Oregon Way and Industrial Way train 2030 model and the impacts to Oregon Way. Gerry pointed out the impact to the system and commented that there is a 10 – 11 minute delay from the blocking unit train and that you also need to think of the 40 minute delay time. George, Port of Longview, asked if the turbines that move at 10:00 and 3:00 could handle this. Gerry mentioned that during the confidential stakeholder interviews, some stakeholders were more forthcoming than others. The committee discussed that they will need to determine what's going to occur West of Oregon Way and what local politics will allow, from a development perspective. Rosemary commented that she thinks they need to keep the momentum going and continue to look at everything from the rail, local, policy, state, and federal levels.

Neal then shared the SR 432 California Way Realignment 2030 modeling. Gerry added that James Bobst with Pacific Fibre Products had commented the desire for a signal at the existing California Way/Columbus Blvd location as well. Gerry mentioned that the analysis did not warrant a signal at this location and due to WSDOT design standards of signal spacing, a signal at this location was not presently recommended.

Neal then began to describe the improvement list that describes completed projects or projects underway and the prioritized short and long term list and order of magnitude costs.

Completed or Current Projects

These projects from the 2001 RDP have been or soon will be completed. They are considered “existing conditions” for this study.

- Traffic Signal Progression along Industrial Way
- I-5 SR 432/Talley Way Interchange
- Alternate Rail Corridor (now called Industrial Rail Corridor)

Current projects on SR 432 that the City of Longview and WSDOT are currently undertaking are also considered “existing conditions.” They are:

- Double Left-turn Lane Westbound at SR 433 (Oregon Way)
Note: this project is considered an existing condition in the traffic modeling, yet is listed as the first project recommended because although the project is well along in the design phase, all construction funds are not yet secured.
- Safety Improvements to SR 432 Eastbound On-ramp from 3rd Avenue

Short Term Highway Improvements (within 10 years)

- Widening and Signal Modifications at SR432/SR433 Intersection
Conceptual Cost \$3.5 million
Intersection capacity improvements are needed at this location. By providing an additional left turn lane for the westbound to southbound movement and by extending the center left turn lane, the capacity at this intersection will be improved. These improvements will be considered an interim solution until the intersection is improved as described under the Long-Term Improvement section.
- Realign California Way /Industrial Way Intersection
Conceptual Cost \$1.2 million (ROW not included)
Realigning California Way with the Industrial Way extension will improve safety operations and improve capacity through the intersection. The two signalized intersections will become one intersection, which will improve the sight distance to stopped vehicles and help to reduce rear-end collisions.
- Second WB Through Lane at Washington Way Intersection
Conceptual Cost \$430,000 (ROW not included)
Future volume increases at this intersection show improvements will be needed to keep this intersection flowing smoothly. Recommended improvements include adding a second west bound through/right turn lane.
- Access Management Improvements
Conceptual Cost - Varies with selected solution
Access management along this corridor will help to improve safety issues and the flow of traffic along Industrial Way. Possible solutions include combining driveways, raised traffic separators, or left turn restrictions. As redevelopment occurs there will be potential to create alternative access locations to the properties.
- Second Left-turn Lane at SR432 Off-ramp to 3rd Ave.
Conceptual Cost \$740,000 (ROW not included)

Future volumes show the need for the addition of a second left turn lane at this location. The City of Longview has resolved the immediate capacity issues by modifying the signal timing at this location

- Realign Weyerhaeuser Entrance with Prudential Blvd.
Conceptual Cost \$1.9 million (ROW not included)
Realigning the Weyerhaeuser entrance with Prudential Boulevard will help to improve the intersection operations, improve access to and from Weyerhaeuser and will reduce conflicting movements due to off-set intersections.

Long Term Highway Improvements (within 20 years)

- Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) at SR432/SR433 Intersection
Conceptual Cost \$70 million (ROW not included)
Grade separation is needed in the future between the proposed rail line and the traffic at this intersection. A SPUI at this location has the least impact to the surrounding area, is the most cost effective alternative and the intersection operates at an acceptable level in the 2030 year.

Neal shared with the committee the modeling of the Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) at Oregon and Industrial Way. And, that the impact to Oregon Way would be minimal. Gerry further explained to the group that the inter-relationship of the highway and rail projects in the corridor is heavily influenced by the assumption that unit train operations west of Oregon Way will materialize.

From the stakeholder interviews, the project team strongly believes unit train service to the west of Oregon Way will start within three to five years. Should unit train service not happen, the recommended highway projects are still needed, but the time period might be extended. The single-point urban interchange at SR 432/SR 433 will be needed to maintain an acceptable level of service before 2030 with or without unit trains. A single-point urban interchange that also grade separates the Reynolds lead will eliminate the rail/highway conflicts from switching and local service rail traffic at this location. The reality of unit train service depends on both the industrial need and the rail service providers' willingness to provide that service. This decision will be driven by economic reality; if a profit can be realized, the service will be provided.

Rosemary added that the SPUI will impact access to businesses in the Starbuck's vicinity. John Bean, City of Longview, mentioned access could be located in the back of the businesses. Dave Campbell, City of Longview, commented that if proposing a SPUI, considerations will need to be made to include Rainier/Oregon side. John added that in the technical report, the team should emphasize the recovery time versus just the delay time. He feels this will better describe the impact to the system and get everyone's attention. John also asked if they had determined what the Oregon Way delay time and recovery time would be if only box car load trains operated on the Reynolds lead and if they could be prepared to answer that if asked. John thinks the team should make this clear in the technical report. Gerry and Neal seemed to think

that some of this was slightly discussed in the rail improvement section but, they would review that section, add to the write-up if necessary and determine what the recovery time would be as well as the delay time.

Gerry then began to talk about political next steps, how we move ahead and potential funding sources. Gerry described the funding section of the Technical Report and how it will provide various funding ideas, such as development of an improvement district or transportation benefit district. Rosemary commented that a partnership will need to be formed with the private sector, which is true for every transportation project.

**Wrap-up and
PMT Staff
Thanks
Stakeholders
for their
participation**

Gerry Smith, and the other Project Management Team members (Neal Christensen, Rosemary Siipola and Karyn Anderson), thanked everyone for their on-going project involvement over this past year. Several committee members thanked the PMT for their efforts. Rosemary added that they need to remain committed to this effort.

Gerry and Karyn reminded the group that the project website would be maintained. Karyn added that her goal was to maintain the website for approximately 1 year after the study is completed. Karyn shared that she'd like to distribute the Final Technical Report (hard copy) to each TAC and Stakeholder member, budget permitting. If not, the group was informed that the Final Technical Report, once completed, would be available electronically to download from the project website.