



**Sub Group 3 Meeting, Mitigation
Access Management Committee
Transportation Building
355 Capitol Street NE, Room 119
Salem, OR 97301
2:30 – 4:00 PM, July 6, 2010
FINAL**

Working Facilitator: Del Huntington.

Participants: Brent Ahrend, Melinda Merrill, Harold Lasley, Bob Bryant, Bob Russell, Mark Whitlow, Doug Bish, Brian Dunn, Jim Hanks, David Warren, Shashi Bajracharya, and Victor Dodier.

Meeting Purpose

Develop expectations and desired outcomes for reaching consensus on “mitigation” measures that ODOT may require as development occurs along the state highways.

Discussion

Bob Russell – The trucking industry is concerned with the type of “street furniture” that is constructed within the median and along the edges of the roadway to mitigate for increased traffic volumes as development occurs. Some examples include median barriers and pork-chops to limit turning movements, bulb-outs, trees and bollards. He is concerned that a vertical and horizontal dimension be preserved and protected along the highway to allow for acceptable truck and freight movements through the roadway corridor. Bob would like to see a set of standards that clearly convey the amount of mitigation that is required for various developments based on the traffic they introduce to the roadway.

Doug Bish – His main concern is focused on mitigation measures that provide safety for all modes of travel, and not limited to auto operations. Examples of mitigation measures may include bulb-outs, turn lanes, raised medians at turn-lanes, and roundabouts.

Jim Hanks – Represented the developer’s perspective, which currently is one of uncertainty as to whether or not the site will be approved, and if approved, whether or not the required mitigation will be proportionate to the proposed development. Jim would like a clear policy on improvements, more certainty in the process, and a limit on the extent that ODOT may require mitigation measures upstream and downstream of the development.

David Warren – Regarding development, the current process often results in a decision at the local level, followed by an application/permit process that the developer initiates with ODOT. This often results in a requirement to revise the proposed site plan based on the ODOT consideration for access, and the process goes back to ground zero in which the local government has to review the changes. Uncertainty in the process leads to frustration and confusion as the site may be approved at the planner level, supported at the ODOT Region level and then ultimately denied at headquarters. (For example, the installation of a new traffic signal requires the approval of the State Traffic Engineer). David would like to have more certainty in the process and a clearer definition on “proportionality” when mitigation is required of the developer.

David would also like to revise the OARs to allow the state with more flexibility, in order to dismiss the need for a traffic study in certain circumstances.

Shashi Bajracharya – Shashi would like to see a system that allows for each developer to pay their proportionate share for roadway improvements.

Melinda Merrill – Melinda is concerned that we consider the big picture, including safety, congestion, and other modes as the mitigation issue is addressed.

Bob Bryant – Bob recognizes that the required timeline and cost to complete the traffic study can be high for developers, yet there no certainty as to the ultimate decision from the agency. ODOT needs the ability to mitigate developer’s impacts more efficiently, at a reduced cost, while providing more certainty on the decision and required mitigation.

Paying a proportionate and fair share has been an issue for ODOT for a long time, though now cities are beginning to experience traffic impacts from developments outside of their jurisdiction. The city does not have any mechanism to charge the developer for additional traffic impacts to their transportation system.

Mark Whitlow – Non-traversable medians should be used only as a last resort, not the first mitigation measure imposed on a proposed or existing development. A second area of concern relates to a future year analysis in the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA). Mitigation measures should be limited to the year of opening to solve for the traffic impacts, not a future year.

Brian Dunn – ODOT is often in a reactionary mode due to workload, inability to always coordinate with local jurisdictions, and the sheer volume of development. (Brian acknowledges that development is slow at the present time). Brian would like to be able to get ahead of the development and plan/develop solutions prior to development requests. He would also like to see greater predictability in decisions.

Brent Ahrend – Similar to Brian’s concern, Brent stated that there is a disconnect in the timeline between the state and local jurisdictions. There are situations where the City cannot approve an application for a local land use action because they lack a commitment

from ODOT. An example of competing issues relates to differing mobility standards. A city may be willing to accept a certain amount of congestion which may be unacceptable to the state.

Brent would like to know if OAR 734-051-0145 requirements for mitigation, relates only to the impacts at the site driveway, or if ODOT has the ability to require mitigation upstream or downstream of the development.

Several other issues were discussed, including:

Can local jurisdictions take over permitting and mitigation measures on certain state highways within their UGB? Russell responded that this may be acceptable, provided that the city agrees to protect and preserve a vertical and horizontal dimension for truck traffic through the corridor.

Can we recommend a statewide System Development Charge (SDC), similar to a mechanism used in many cities as a means to have all users share in the cost of mitigation measures? It was generally acknowledged that while a statewide SDC would be advantageous, it would be beyond the scope of the sub-group.

Is it possible to develop a matrix that identifies a series of mitigation measures that will be required within the UGB? This system would provide increased certainty to the developer without the need to develop a costly TIA as each development occurs.

Mobility standards may need to be re-visited in order to allow for in-fill and density goals within the UGB. It was explained that cities are able to work with ODOT to develop separate mobility standards for their community. While this would likely result in higher congestion levels during portions of the day, the city leaders would have made a conscious decision to allow for increased congestion within their city.

Action Items

As the topic areas are broad and potentially diverse, it was determined that Bob Bryant and Del Huntington will work together to develop a draft list of priorities for the sub-group to review.

Bob Russell will provide an update of the sub-group issues at the next AM Committee meeting on July 12th.

Future Meeting Date for the Sub-Group # 3

Del will send out a notice requesting possible meeting dates, though the preference is to meet on July 21st, from 3:00 – 5:00 PM

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.