

Special NW Oregon Area Commission on Transportation/ODOT

Dennis Edwards Tunnel Constructability Review Public Meeting

March 1, 2010

Chisholm Community Center

Seaside, OR

The meeting was called to order by Shirley Kalkhoven, Chair. The following members and guests attended:

Ken Bell—Port of Tillamook Bay	Jeff Nelson—KAST Radio
Rita Bernhard—Columbia County	David Neys—ODOT District 1 Manager
Jack Bland—Port of Astoria	Dan Nichols—Manzanita Business Alliance
Ron Bline—Sunset Empire Transit District	Patrick Nofield—Escape Lodging Company
Representative Deborah Boone—OR Legislature	Dave Norstedt—Martin Hospitality
Carol Breeneman—Country Bungalow	Jim Orley—Seaside Resident
Bill Carpenter—Seaside Resident	Laurie Oxley—Seaside Downtown Dev Assn
Keith Chandler—Seaside Aquarium	Lesle Palmeri—Walker & Company
Dave/Janice Crowdord—Warrenton Residents	Kathleen Peterson—KP Graphic Arts, Tora Sushi
Susan Deshou—Seaside Carousel/Mall	Kitty Poore—Tillamook Co Private Sector
Linda Dugan—Farmers In	Cassandra Profita—Daily Astorian
Linda Garland—Seaside Business Owner	Barbara Pruijn—Four Paws on the Beach
Alaina Giguere—Realtor	Tim Regan—Clatsop Assn of Realtors
Pauline Goldstein—Resident	Robin Risley—Clatsop Assn of Realtors
Lili Gordon—ODOT Region 1	Keyaho Rohlfs—Business Owner
Stanley Gwinner—Gwinner Enterprises	Bob Russell—Oregon Trucking Associations
Bert Hartman—ODOT-Bridge	Gary Sanchesland—Astoria Resident
Carol Hayford—Cannon Beach Gazette/Seaside Signal	Mark See—City of Cannon Beach
Tommy Huntington—Clatsop Assn Realtors	Becky/Stuart Sherlock—Workspace Solution
Senator Betsy Johnson—Oregon Legislature	Kent Smith—Mayor, City of Gearhart
David Kim—ODOT Region 1	Jay Speakman—Sesame and Lilies
Kathy Kleczek—Cannon Beach Business Owner	Betty Steele—Chisholm Community Center
Norma Klingerman—Wrights for Camping	Charles Steynor—Ecola Classic Lodge
Mark Labhart—Tillamook County Commission	Jeff TerHar—Business Owner
Don Larson—Mayor, City of Seaside	Peter Torhar—Seaside Resident
Slade Leahy—Ken Leahy Construction	Sue Truck—Bruce's Candy Kitchen
Rosemary Lohrke—Columbia County Private Sector	Neal Wallace—City of Seaside
Molly Marshall—Modern Villa Gallery	Roger Waller—Portland Fridge
Rich Mays—City of Cannon Beach	Melinda Ward—Bella Espresso/Pizza al Fetta
Jim McDonald—Tolovana Inn	Ed Wegner—Clatsop County
Larry McKinley—ODOT Region 2	Ingrid Weisenbach—ODOT Region 2
Bob Meyers—Seaside Resident	Lonny Welter—Columbia County Transportation
Mike Morgan—City of Cannon Beach	Danny Winnett—Seaside Resident
Matt Mumford—Tillamook Transportation District	Mark Winstanley—City of Seaside
Robert Musher—Clatsop County Commission	Bob Young—City of Vernonia
	Mark Youso—Realtor

Excused: Clark Berry, Shawn Reiersgaard, Liane Welch

Meeting Introduction: Chair Kalkhoven provided an overview of the NWACT to those attending the meeting—NWACT was established to provide a forum for public input into transportation projects and to establish transportation priorities for NW Oregon. She thanked the public for attending the meeting.

Dennis Edwards Tunnel Constructability Review: David Kim described the current condition of the tunnel, necessitating rehabilitation of the interior. Purpose of the meeting was to solicit input on the type of closure preferred by the public as the tunnel is repaired. He then described the options identified by and preliminarily scoped out in the recently completed Constructability Review:

1. Option 1: Base Project Elements Only

- Includes relining tunnel, upgrading drainage system, and replacing lighting
- Estimated closures/costs: 7 week total closure (\$9.3 million) **OR**, 12 weeks of weeknight closures; tunnel open weekdays, weekends and holidays (\$11.1 million)

2. Option 2: Base Project Elements + Portal Raising Option

- Existing portals raised approximately 2.5 feet to achieve vertical clearance
- Requires specialized work for the historic portal stone masonry, which will be removed and replaced on a new portal wall structure
- Estimated closures/costs: 8 week total closure (\$11.2 million) **OR**, 13 weeks of weeknight closures; tunnel open weekdays, weekends and holidays (\$13.3 million)

3. Option 3: Base Project Elements + Floor Lowering Option

- Roadway elevation lowered throughout the tunnel approximately 2.5 feet to achieve vertical clearance
- Existing portals and stone masonry remain intact
- Estimated closure/cost: 9 week total closure (\$13.79 million). No partial closure available with this option

Estimated Project Schedule:

- Decision on tunnel options April 2010
- Final Design phase April 2010—Fall 2010
- Construction begins Early 2011
- Construction complete Prior to Summer 2011

ODOT will be establishing bidding criteria to ensure only a highly qualified contractor, experienced in this type of tunnel reconstruction is used, to ensure work is completed on time.

Public Communications: A Dennis Edwards Tunnel website has been established at DennisEdwardsTunnel.org, and ODOT is considered using Twitter networking. ODOT's TripCheck will also have up to date information on the tunnel conditions during construction, potentially even installing a "Construction Cam" if feasible.

Benefits to the Trucking Industry to Increasing the Vertical Clearance: Bob Russell noted several: 1) Safety—reduce need to straddle center line on over height trucks; 2) Redundancy—Hwy 30 is closed more often due to storms; and 3) Need to move freight to the coast. The local coast economy will affect the number of trucks traveling Hwy 26, truck traffic will only increase as the need for freight increases. The North Coast has no rail service, thus the need to maintain truck passage. The Oregon Truckers Assn vastly prefers a partial to a full closure option.

NWACT Questions/Concerns:

- Columbia County has concerns about keeping the detour road (Hwy 47) in good condition during the winter months when rehabilitation is scheduled. Response: Bob Russell commented Freight will not be using the detour, and will use Hwy 30 instead. ODOT will upgrade the striping, reflective markers and other possible improvements for the night time closures; and it will also maintain the roadway as a state highway during inclement weather: sleet, ice, snow.
- Are there other trucking restrictions on Hwy 26 to the Coast? Port of Tillamook Bay Rail Overpass east of tunnel is also height restricted. Decision on what to do with the overpass awaits a decision as to whether the railroad will be operating along there in the future. Fixing the overpass clearance is a much smaller scale project than the tunnel rehabilitation. Only two bridges are weight restricted: Balmer Creek and Johnson Creek, both of which are scheduled for replacement in 2011, using rapid replacement techniques where both bridges are pre-cast and replaced simultaneously.
- How would ODOT make up cost differential if increase vertical clearance? Bob Russell commented the difference would come from the trucking industry.
- What about Spring Break? Tunnel would remain open during as much of the special events and scheduled Spring Breaks as possible. ODOT will work with the local communities to establish key times for the tunnel to remain open.

Audience/Public Questions/Concerns:

- Difficult to believe that there is enough height-restricted truck traffic to warrant the need to increase the vertical clearance. Have never seen the tunnel closed to allow a truck passage through the tunnel in the decades of travel to the coast.
- Closing the highway again to address the railroad overpass would be doubly hard on coast businesses. Response: Nothing is planned for at least the next 4 years.
- Raising the vertical clearance only adds to the risk that the tunnel may be closed/partially closed longer than planned. Response: ODOT is looking at potentially a different bidding process to ensure quality and experience over being required to take the lowest bid.
- Any closure elicits bad publicity for the Coast tourism industry. Response: ODOT will work with the Oregon Tourism Division “Travel Oregon” on a marketing campaign, akin to what was done during the Arch Cape Tunnel closure.
- Remember to include transit in closure communications. The project will affect transit service to and from the coast, including Amtrak buses.
- Hwy 26 should remain a tourism corridor, for safe and relaxing visitor travel. Enhancing it for large oversized trucks would make it less safe to drive for the visiting population.
- What about emergency medical services that may need to go to/from the coast at night? Response: ODOT will work with local emergency response providers and have a plan.
- Why is the tunnel a higher priority than Hwy 101 flooding just south of Seaside, which closes the road? Response: ODOT is working on solving the flooding problem with a consortium of local communities and Clatsop County. Working with regulators to ensure necessary permits to fix the highway will be issued.

Next Steps: Two more public meetings will be held: Wednesday, March 10th from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at the Seaside Convention Center, and Tuesday, March 16th from 5:00 – 7:00 pm at the Banks High School Cafeteria.

Recorded: Mary McArthur, Staff

Shirley Kalkhoven, Chair