

MEETING NOTES

Main-McVay Transit Study Governance Team

October 15, 2015

Library Meeting Room - City Hall - Springfield, Oregon

Attendees: Governance Team

Mayor Christine Lundberg, City of Springfield
Councilor Marilee Woodrow, City of Springfield
Frannie Brindle, Oregon Department of Transportation
Angelynn Pierce, Lane Transit District Board of Directors
Don Nordin, Lane Transit District Board of Directors
Gino Grimaldi, City of Springfield (Ex Officio)
Ron Kilcoyne, Lane Transit District (Ex Officio)
Gary Wildish, Lane Transit District Board of Directors (Ex Officio)

Project Management

Annette Spickard, City of Springfield
Emma Newman, City of Springfield
John Evans, Lane Transit District
Tom Schwetz, Lane Transit District
Edward McGlone, Lane Transit District

Support

Ashley Neet, Lane Transit District

Guest

Rob Zako, Better Eugene-Springfield Transit

Welcome and Agenda Review

Ms. Lundberg called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda. Those present introduced themselves. Mr. Wildish indicated that his position on the Governance Team (GT) would be assumed by Mr. Nordin.

Project Overview and Phase 2 Scope

Mr. Evans reviewed the timeline for Phase 2 of the project. He highlighted the beginning of the project in June 2013, which started with a series of community conversations and resulted in alternatives. He said Phase 2 would refine alternatives and arrive at a single solution by May 2016. If the decision was to advance a single project into development, the environmental process would commence. He said the project would be streamlined under a categorical exclusion, which was estimated to cost less than \$100,000 and take three to four months. Once the environmental process was concluded the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) would be asked for permission to enter project development and seek federal funding.

Mr. Evans hoped project development could begin in late 2016 with design work, evaluation and then further refine the project to meet community needs. The final design phase would address and minimize impacts and construction could potentially start in the 2018 construction season. He expected a two-year construction period, with opening in the fall of 2020.

Mr. Evans emphasized that Phase 2 would include extensive outreach to property owners and businesses along the corridor. He referred to the Phase 2 scope of work outline included in the agenda packet. He said the alternatives under consideration were enhanced bus, bus rapid transit and no build on Main Street and enhanced bus and no build on McVay Highway. Choices and trade-offs would be examined for each segment during preliminary design work. Businesses and property owners would be consulted as a final design was developed and that information would be presented to the GT for review and approval, followed by presentation to the Lane Transit District (LTD) Board and Springfield City Council for approval.

Ms. Lundberg asked how progress to date on the project compared to development of other transit corridors. Mr. Evans said it was at the point of decision-making by Springfield and LTD about the actual nature of the project. Mr. Schwetz added that it took a long time to identify the locally preferred alternative for the West Eugene EmX Extension and there was significant controversy during the process. He said the Main-McVay project was progressing much faster.

Ms. Lundberg said the purpose of the initial Main-McVay project phase was to avoid the problems and controversy that arose over the West Eugene EmX project and gauge community support. Based on feedback the City Council and LTD Board voted to proceed with the project, but she was concerned with the abbreviated timeline. She said the public outreach to date had avoided using the term "EmX" and the public was unaware that EmX was one of the alternatives being considered. She wanted to be sure that the community understood that the alternatives the council had approved advancing for further study did include EmX. She said the planning process for the corridor should be done in a way that was informative and communicated well with residents and business so the resulting project fit the vision for Main Street and the public was pleased to see it proceed, rather than voicing strong objections to the council. She did not feel the proposed process would meet those needs. She asked if the Project Team had considered the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC).

Mr. Evans said the decision was to not have a SAC during Phase 2 in order to work within the available budget of \$350,000. He said during Phase 1, as part of the entire Main Street effort, there was a concerted effort to avoid identifying the project as EmX when that decision had not yet been made. Now that the council and LTD Board had identified EmX as one of the options under consideration, outreach efforts would clarify that, along with the enhanced corridor and no build options, to the public.

Ms. Lundberg felt that it should have been made clear at the beginning of the process in Phase 1 that EmX was a potential option.

Mr. Schwetz saw two aspects of public engagement. One aspect was the process of planning an EmX corridor, which was an iterative process that involved adjacent property owners and businesses. Another aspect or level was the broader community engagement. He asked what outreach strategies Ms. Lundberg would like to see used at this point in the process.

Ms. Lundberg observed that there had not been controversy on the Franklin Boulevard corridor because the process avoided misunderstandings by quickly addressing misinformation and

assuring that people understood what was happening. She said Springfield was more accustomed to doing projects that did not meet with great resistance from the community.

Mr. Grimaldi said the team needed to be careful to not assume public acceptance of a project just because no feedback had been received from most of the community. Often the controversy arose as preparations for construction began and people suddenly became aware of the project. He said the process should include constant outreach, particularly to those most impacted by the project, and ongoing opportunities for public input and feedback to those impacted.

Ms. Woodrow felt that not identifying EmX as an option from the beginning increased the potential for public opposition as the community did not clearly understand the options to be studied.

Ms. Pierce asked what modes of outreach had been used in the public communications efforts to date. If the full spectrum of communication modes had not been used in order to reach everyone in the community, she asked if there was a reason they could not be used at this time. She felt it was a good time to take a fresh look at the overall process and identify the driving factors behind the Main Street initiative in order to reframe the conversation.

Mr. Evans said Phase 2 could include the types of activities suggested by GT members, but a larger budget would be required and the funding sources identified. He asked for direction from the GT on where to focus efforts.

Ms. Lundberg said the process should be based on what was right and necessary to help the community understand and support the project and not budget constraints. Investing in the process at the beginning could prevent costly legal fees later on. She invited comments from other GT members.

Mr. Kilcoyne commented that the process as proposed was based on a constrained budget. He agreed with Ms. Lundberg that another approach was to design the process on what was needed to engage the community, determine the cost, and then find the necessary funds. He was not advocating for one approach over another. He said the proposed process timeline was also based on the hope that the project could be ready for a Small Starts construction grant application. He noted that the signs around the community opposing EmX were often from people outside the community and noted their placement in rural communities that would never be served by EmX. He said the signs were often placed without the property owners' permission.

Ms. Lundberg felt that type of opposition was not typical for Springfield because of a public engagement process that helped people understand the nature and intent of projects. She did not feel the proposed process timeline was sufficient to fully inform the public.

Ms. Woodrow said the outreach to date was well done and she hoped to see it continue during Phase 2.

Ms. Brindle commented that the initial outreach process went well and was consistent with the city's direction to LTD to avoid saying Main Street was an EmX corridor only, but rather that EmX was one of the options being explored. She said this was the point at which the public could be informed about the three options identified for further study and the study process

would keep the community informed about the details of each option. She felt that more time and funds were needed to make sure the public was properly engaged.

Mr. Grimaldi concurred that the decision-making process should fit the community.

Mr. Schwetz said project management considered three main factors: scope, schedule and budget. Changes to one factor would affect the others. If the scope or schedule was expanded, project partners would need to find the resources to accommodate that. He said if broader community outreach and more individualized work with property owners and businesses was desired, that would impact both the schedule and budget.

Mr. Wildish felt the Phase 1 outreach was well done. He asked if the outreach in Phase 2, which would have a narrower scope of study, should continue with a broad community outreach effort or begin to focus more on those property owners and businesses directly affected by the project.

Ms. Lundberg said the community had indicated to the council that it supported moving forward with a project, so now that Phase 2 would focus more narrowly on a corridor, and the outreach could also focus more narrowly on those along the corridor who would be most impacted, but other concurrent projects addressing issues along Main Street would continue to involve the broader community and keep people informed. She said the Main Street corridor was very heavily used by people throughout the region.

Ms. Pierce agreed with Ms. Lundberg that targeted communication with businesses and property owners along the corridor was crucial and it was also important to maintain the larger conversation with the community so the general public was well informed about the project. She said the Main Street corridor was used on a daily basis by people who did not work or own property along it, but would still be affected by construction activities.

Ms. Spickard offered the assistance of Springfield staff and their experience with other projects to help shape the outreach campaign and events. She said if there were time constraints a number of activities could occur concurrently rather than consecutively to reach the most people in the shortest time.

Mr. Evans said staff would revise the scope and schedule, determine costs and allow the city and LTD to decide how to fund the process.

Ms. Brindle suggested that LTD also examine where there might be inherent risks, like right-of-way and environmental justice impacts.

Ms. Lundberg and Mr. Grimaldi stressed that the overarching goal for Main Street was safety and the goals and problem statements should guide the community conversation. The intent was not to find a path of least resistance, but rather to help make a decision that was best for the community.

Mr. Wildish asked how LTD could help the city determine what it wanted to accomplish and make the necessary decisions.

Mr. Schwetz suggested detaching from the next steps and look at the bigger picture and the results the city wanted to achieve. He said the next step could narrow its focus to those directly

affected with the goal of matching the design work with the ongoing feedback. LTD could also work with Springfield staff to assure adequate communitywide communication to establish awareness of the project.

Ms. Woodrow commented that people would see the project from the perspective of their own needs and the process should help them see it in the context of the entire corridor.

Ms. Lundberg summarized that LTD and Springfield staff would revise the project scope and timeline and determine the budget necessary to accomplish that.

Relationship to Other LTD Major Capital Projects

Mr. Schwetz said federal funding remained flat and competition for dollars, including Small Starts, was increasing. LTD had obtained 80 percent federal participation in the three previous EmX corridors, but future projects were likely to require a higher percentage of local match. He said local match could include funds from the state, which was the primary match source for the West Eugene and Gateway EmX projects. He said the need for more substantial local resources might mean that LTD would turn to its partners to approach the state legislature for funding. He said the MovingAhead process began with concerns from the community about the length of time it took to plan, design and build an EmX corridor, which was typically 10 years. MovingAhead was intended to develop a vision of the entire system and more efficient, expedited process for developing corridors.

Mr. Schwetz said LTD was interested in pursuing funding for multiple corridor projects in order to build the system. The MovingAhead process produced a recommendation to advance four corridors for further study; that recommendation was approved by the Eugene City Council and LTD Board. The corridors were Highway 99, River Road, Coburg Road and a route to Lane Community College. He said the Eugene portion of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard would also be studied as an enhanced corridor, including some level of transit lanes in the vicinity of Autzen Stadium. He expected that the process to select locally preferred alternatives for those four corridors to be completed by early fall of 2016. He said those four corridors, plus Main Street, represented the rest of the system. He hoped that a project could be put forward that would include multiple corridors to build the system.

Ms. Lundberg said that Main Street should be on the list of corridors, which made it especially important that the outreach efforts already undertaken continue in order to assure community support, avoid the controversy and opposition that Eugene was experiencing with the West Eugene EmX corridor and guarantee that the Main Street corridor was a priority for development.

Mr. Kilcoyne said that Main Street was LTD's busiest corridor, with many redevelopment opportunities to complement a major investment in transit, which would make it both a competitive corridor for funding and a priority for implementation by LTD.

Mr. Evans said that a solid partnership between LTD and the city would make the project stronger and more competitive.

Mr. Wildish commented that the region was in a good position to be competitive in preparation for the 2021 World Championships and the work being done now by regional partners would support funding requests.

Ms. Brindle urged that Springfield's representative on the EmX Steering Committee actively participate in that group, as all of those issues were discussed by that body.

Follow Up and Next Steps

Mr. Evans said the Project Management Team would meet and develop a refined scope, budget and schedule to present to the GT at its next meeting.

Mr. Grimaldi asked that the Project Management Team also develop some funding recommendations.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Recorded by Lynn Taylor