



MEETING SUMMARY
Sheldon/Wilton Working Group
Meeting #2
June 10, 2009

Sheldon/Wilton Working Group Members

Richard Bisnett (absent)	Shirley Peters (absent)
June Coats	Russ Shields
Tom Franzoia	Tom Shine
Bill Kutzer (absent)	Barbara Washburn
Bill Myers	

Tom Zlotkowski, Executive Director, Capital SouthEast Connector
Gene Endicott, Facilitator (absent)
Michele McCormick, Facilitator
Pam Johns, Resource Consultant
Sara Eisenberg, Meeting Scribe

Experts:

John Long, DKS Associates
Matt Carpenter, SACOG

1) Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was held at the Connector JPA office in Mather. Group members, consultants and experts introduced themselves and the meeting began.

2) Review of May 27 Meeting

Mr. Zlotkowski provided each group member with a personalized copy of the participant agreement, revised based on comments from the last meeting. Group members in attendance signed the agreement and each received a copy. The group also received the mission statement, revised based on comments from the last meeting. There was further discussion and a re-revised version of the mission statement will be provided to each group member via email.

The group reviewed the six alternatives selected at the first meeting for further review. Copies of the alternatives map will be provided to the group at the next meeting. The selected alternatives are:

1. Grant Line Road
2. "Baby Bypass"
3. Bradshaw Road
4. Distributive Alternative (fanning traffic to existing roads such as Bradshaw, Calvine, etc. in the Sheldon area)
5. Floodplain "edge" bypass
6. Floodplain "big" (green/white routes on Sheldon alternatives map) bypass

There was a question whether the “Baby Bypass” was a formal alternative that went through the stakeholder process and therefore must be studied as part of the environmental process. The group was unsure if the alternative was part of the “legacy” alternatives that SACOG turned over to the Connector JPA. The main concern was that the group is evaluating a limited number of alternatives and may not want to include this one. It was clarified by Mr. Zlotkowski that the group does need to review the “Baby Bypass” alternative as part of their work, and it can be noted that it is not an alternative recommended by the group. Mr. Zlotkowski said the alternatives should be used to frame this discussion and hybrids may be desired by the group. It should be noted, however, that the “baby bypass” will need to be studied further in the EIR since it was part of the official alternatives provided by SACOG.

There was also discussion about the distributive option and what the widening of certain roads under that option would result in for the community. For instance, widening Bradshaw and Sheldon Roads under this option would “chop up” the surrounding neighborhoods into North, South, East and West areas. It was also noted that Elk Grove’s Rural Roads policy will likely affect the level of widening/improvements that can be done due to the triggers the policy put into place. The Elk Grove General Plan will also be a factor, and it does not list most of the roads discussed with as many lanes as they would need to have for the distributive alternative to be viable. The group agreed to put the issue aside for further future discussion.

There were questions about the characteristics of different alternatives and performance. It was noted that the start and end points of the current Sheldon-area alignments are conceptual and the exact locations may change due to performance issues.

3) Land Use and Traffic Projections

Mr. Zlotkowski noted that the group would be guiding the discussion with the experts in terms of what they wanted to learn and gather more information on to study further. It was also noted that this is a precursor to the larger environmental process that will be taking place later this year.

John Long of DKS Associates touched on his background and experience in the Sacramento region and talked about the challenges of forecasting future traffic and growth patterns, especially in the current economy. For the Connector, they are required by Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration to forecast 20 years past the estimated completion date of the project, so they are “looking in a crystal ball” at 2040-2045 traffic and growth numbers. He noted that a number of different things are taken into consideration when projecting future numbers, including the General Plans of different jurisdictions, SACOG’s Blueprint (projections to 2035) and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035. Different jurisdictions are at different points in the process of updating their General Plans, which makes it more challenging. Mr. Long noted that it is theoretically possible for all planned residential growth to take place between now and 2035, but it is not likely all planned non-residential growth (retail, industrial) will occur.

Mr. Long noted that there are multiple areas where planned development will impact the Connector, in Sacramento County, Rancho Cordova and other areas. He stressed the importance of looking at the universe of information and not honing in on one area,

because looking at something in isolation is not useful to come to a conclusion. A question was raised about the validity of the data that is being used for the population and traffic forecasting because economic conditions have changed since the numbers were compiled. Mr. Long noted that forecasts are revisited on a regular basis.

Matt Carpenter of SACOG reviewed the process by which the Blueprint was developed, which included lots of community input and involvement as well as review of technical studies and input from local jurisdictions. Key goals of the Blueprint were to encourage smart growth and preserve valuable land that may be encroached upon with current growth plans. The MTP focused on transportation, and the plan tried to match transportation investments with land use ideas. He noted that there are always more projects than dollars available, which presents challenges. SACOG will be revisiting economic trends, population and demographic projections when working on the MTP update, probably in 2011. Scenario development will be part of the long-range plan update.

The group discussed the visioning plans for the Jackson Highway area and Rancho Murieta area in terms of how it will affect the Connector process. The group requested that sensitivity analysis be done when they have selected a few alternatives to see the effects on performance, but that may not provide useful information because it would be focused on a small area. Mr. Long noted that there are some discrepancies between the Blueprint and different jurisdictions' General Plans in terms of development, and only time will tell what will happen. More non-residential development is planned than can likely be supported by planned residential growth.

The group also discussed the differences between traffic modeling tools SacSim and SacMet. SacMet is currently being used and is the type of traffic modeling tool that is most commonly used around the country. It is pretty advanced and can do activity-based models with a high degree of specificity: it looks at each household's activities instead of looking at the average behavior of a group of households. It is difficult to use because it requires a lot of information and can't be updated piecemeal for small area models. The question was asked if it would be valuable or useful to run models based on a small area, but Mr. Long was unsure of how valuable that would be.

Mr. Long talked about specific traffic modeling used with the Connector. He said they are always comparing modeling to the MTP, using it as a benchmark. There is variation between the MTP and other plans as to the width of roads in the vicinity of the Connector (White Rock, Bradshaw, Bruceville and Calvine Roads, specifically). There has been recent debate on the Connector development team about using numbers from the MTP 2035 to project 2040-2045 levels of traffic while using numbers from other sources like General Plans to project population and land use levels in 2040-2045. The team is using General Plan numbers from various jurisdictions to project both land use and traffic numbers.

There was discussion of the number of lanes of a Connector through Sheldon, as it is projected that demand will exceed a four-lane alternative. Demand will be greater north and south of Sheldon and if the City of Elk Grove and/or Sacramento County build what will be needed to meet that demand, four lanes may not be sufficient.

There was discussion of transit options, and Mr. Zlotkowski noted that the Connector team is regularly meeting with Regional Transit to determine the transit system that will be most effective and most used in conjunction with the Connector, whether it is along the Connector alignment or near it. There was also discussion of air quality analysis in terms of the environmental process and stoplights, stop signs or other methods to control the flow of traffic on the Connector. Mr. Zlotkowski shared ideas he gathered at a recent Intelligent Transportation System show, including using real-time pollution analysis to determine stoplight timing.

The group also discussed how the General Plans of local jurisdictions will have large impacts on the Connector and its environmental process. A greater number of lanes through Sheldon (six as opposed to four) may need to be studied to address projected demand and the plans of surrounding jurisdictions. There was also discussion of natural resource constraints, especially water, in regard to upcoming development. Mr. Carpenter said analysis of items such as that would be part of the next update, in the technical analysis and evaluation of local General Plans.

Mr. Long noted the challenges inherent in keeping current with traffic counts, but said the project team is working to use updated information. Because information is constantly changing, land uses and the projected necessary lanes may change. There was a basic discussion of the Connector's "high concept," which would include expressways north and south of Sheldon. It will be discussed in more detail at the next traffic-related meeting.

It was noted that specific questions should be sent to Mr. Zlotkowski to share with Mr. Long to gather more information for a future meeting. The meeting wrapped up with discussion on the topics and suggested experts for the next meeting, focusing on environmental considerations. The group is interested in learning about how Florida handles roadways built in floodplains, as a conservation tool and meeting demand needs. The group offered to do research on its own and provide whatever material is available online to the JPA and themselves. Mr. Zlotkowski offered to contact a subject matter expert from TNC to see if there is anyone available for the next meeting.

4) Next Meeting

The next meeting, on June 24, will be held from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the Connector JPA office. Future meetings will be held from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Connector JPA office.

**This is an annotated version of the notes transcribed during the meeting. More detailed notes are available upon request.*