

MEETING SUMMARY
Sheldon/Wilton Working Group
Meeting #7
September 1, 2009

Sheldon/Wilton Working Group Members

Richard Bisnett (absent)
June Coats
Tom Franzoia (absent)
Bill Kutzer (absent)
Bill Myers

Shirley Peters (absent)
Russ Shields
Tom Shine
Barbara Washburn

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

Subject Matter Experts

John Long, DKS
Vicki Axiaq, ICF Jones & Stokes
Bob Cermak, Parsons Brinkerhoff
Kathy Wickam, Parsons Brinkerhoff

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was held at the Connector JPA office in Mather. Mr. Endicott noted that the agenda would be modified to allow the Group to review their Draft Report with everyone before the evaluation matrix was addressed.

2. Review of August 12 Meeting: Bypass Typical Section and Cost Estimate, Bradshaw Road Alternative

The group did not note changes to the previous meeting's minutes, but were provided with copies for review; the notes are also posted on the Connector web site. If any changes are noted, please contact Sara Eisenberg.

3. Working Group Report and Evaluation Matrix

3.1. Sheldon/Wilton Community Working Group Draft Report

The Group provided an overview of the draft report they developed to explain to the community the process the Group participated in and provide context of the ideas and thought process behind the process and results. The Group is unsure the evaluation matrix would be sufficient without context, so they created the report.

The goals for the report are to recap the Group's objectives as they understand them; provide feedback on the process and next steps; and provide content and context for the upcoming community meeting.

The Group's overall goal was to select a limited number of alternatives they would like included in the environmental analysis (since the No Build alternative will be

evaluated by default). The Group was provided detailed information on various aspects of the project and selected two alternatives: one route through Sheldon and a bypass alternative through the floodplain.

Additional goals, as the Group understands them, are to look at the factors the community noted as important to them at the last community meeting; evaluate options to handle the potential effects on Old Town Sheldon; evaluate the potential effects on the rural quality of life; ensure floodplain protection; and evaluate options to control growth. The group also wants to be sure effects on Wilton are included in the overall project evaluation.

The Group reiterated members' concern about planning based on projections because the economic downturn, among other things, may affect the projections upon which the Project is being planned. The Group also expressed interest in using the incremental approach to developing the Project, as Mr. Long noted may be possible, as they have been through a similar process with the Rural Roads Project and thought it was a good process.

The Group also wants to maximize the effects of mitigation work and minimize the negative impacts of the project to their community. The Group proposed some creative alternatives to that end, including reorienting Old Town Sheldon as a community enhancement project, and implementing broader environmental protection as part of the bypass alternative. The Group believes the planning and design process should be creative and cutting-edge to address these issues.

Stakeholder engagement and coordination will be essential to the success of the project, as project leaders agreed. The Group posed the question of what community involvement will look like moving forward, whether the Working Group continues or not, and proposed a process to continue community involvement.

The Group proposed that the Connector hire a consultant with experience in community design to set up an office in Sheldon. The consultant's charge would be to fully engage with the community and facilitate a multiple-month process to gather information from stakeholders to inform the environmental analysis of the Group's preferred alternative routes. This proposed process would take place before the environmental analysis of the entire project gets underway (after scoping meetings later this year) and result in proposed costs, input from stakeholders and the regulatory agencies involved and ultimately, the group feels, the best alternative for the community.

Mr. Zlotkowski thanked the group for their summary and agreed a huge milestone has been reached with the selection of two alternatives for further analysis. He also noted the group has come up with creative ideas for the technical team to explore. He agreed that "thinking outside the box" is valuable for developing solutions, but reminded the group that Sheldon is one small part of the larger project that impacts many jurisdictions, and the Board will make the ultimate decision.

Mr. Zlotkowski noted that Group members are welcome to continue to consult with Board members and offer their input, and that he will take the Group's input into consideration when making his recommendation to the Board. His ultimate

responsibility is to keep the project on track and on budget, and asked for clarification on the process the Group is proposing.

The group then discussed parameters for finding an innovative way to handle the Sheldon section of the project while still moving forward. The Group considers their proposed process to be a mini-scoping process, with the deliverable being two fleshed-out alternatives for consideration in the EIR/EIS. The timing of the proposed process was discussed, along with the Group's detailed vision of what the process would entail. The group then discussed how the information from this proposed process would be used and how it could inform the EIR/EIS. The Group felt the mini-process would produce enhanced information, enhanced community input and be the best chance for the community to understand that all alternatives were thoroughly evaluated.

Mr. Zlotkowski agrees about the perceived value of the process but expressed concern that a mini-process could be an endless feedback loop. He is unsure how it would inform the EIR/EIS process since some of the information the Group is requesting be included in the mini-process would not be determined until the full EIR/EIS process. There was discussion about the differences between a programmatic and a project EIR, and Mr. Zlotkowski noted a decision has not been made yet as to which the Connector will undertake.

The Group noted one of the reasons for proposing the mini-scoping process is to gather more technical detail on various aspects of the two alignment alternatives to help the community determine their preferred alternative. Another reason is to present initial information to resource and regulatory agencies that will be involved in the process to gather early feedback. The Group wants to ensure the best and most progressive expert thinking and analysis is applied to the project to address environmental concerns. Ms. Axiaq noted there is value in the proposed process from those perspectives.

The discussion returned to a concern that a process like this would produce lots of information but not necessarily result in consensus from the community and would likely delay forward movement on the overall project. The Group agreed that a solution everyone agrees with may not be found, but feels the proposed process is important to develop additional detailed information for the community to feel a level of comfort with the process and help inform the larger EIR/EIS process.

The discussion also touched upon whether it would be better to do a quick analysis to determine some of the information the Group feels the community is interested in, gathering feedback from resource/regulatory agencies, and then sending it through the larger EIR/EIS process. There was also discussion of Army Corps of Engineers permitting requirements and standards.

The Group will continue working to refine its report, and will include a clearer picture of the additional information they feel is needed to make a recommendation. Mr. Zlotkowski noted the Group's report, along with information from technical experts, will inform his recommendation to the Board. He also noted that no final decision will be made until the EIR is complete and certified by the Board, and assured the Group there is more time in this process.

3.2. Evaluation Matrix

The group then transitioned into a discussion of the evaluation matrix, another tool to help Mr. Zlotkowski develop his recommendation to the Board of Directors on the Sheldon-area alignment. Ms. Wickam reviewed the alternatives listed as well as the evaluation options and noted the focus of the chart is on community values and community impacts. Other items to include were noted, including air and water quality and maintaining economy of Sheldon as a viable services center.

The Group questioned why there were roadway alternatives listed that were not discussed in great detail, as they do not feel they have enough information to evaluate roadways they did not fully investigate. Mr. Zlotkowski noted the chart included all alternatives the group started with. There was discussion about how the matrix should be used – to determine the information the Group still needs in order to make a decision on that alternative, or to use what is there to indicate their preferred alternatives. The Group was concerned about filling out the matrix with no context of why they marked one point instead of another.

Mr. Zlotkowski feels the matrix is qualitative data that may be presented to the Board to illuminate the Group's activities – and if the Group does not feel they have enough information to make a determination on an alternative or a data point, that demonstrates the need for a continued concerted effort such as this. Mr. Zlotkowski and the technical expert team will develop a matrix using their combined expertise, and Mr. Zlotkowski will mesh that with the Group's report to formulate his recommendations to the Board.

The Group discussed amending its report to cover all of the alternatives listed in the matrix, to be used as an accompanying document. Mr. Endicott encouraged the Group to take the matrix with them to help inform the revised report. A revised version of the matrix reflecting the technical team's evaluations will be provided at the next meeting.

4. Working Group Report on Community Coverage

The Group had nothing to report that wasn't already addressed.

5. Community Workshop

The JPA is planning to host another community meeting in early October. The group discussed the information that would be presented at the meeting, including the output of the Working Group process and plans to move forward. The Group recommended the meeting be held at Pleasant Grove Elementary School. Meeting details, including date, time and location, will be shared when finalized.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held September 16 at 5:00 p.m. at the Connector JPA office. Discussion at the next meeting will focus on reviewing the revised Working Group report, the evaluation matrix and planning for the community meeting.

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