

SUMMARY OF NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

Set B: May 17 and 18, 2006

Overview

Neighborhood meetings Set B were held on May 17 and 18, 2006, to gain input from residents in the area of the Steptoe Street Extension Project. Members of the project team, including the **City of Kennewick** (Steve Plummer, Dan Kaufman, John Deskins), the **City of Richland** (Marlin Brinkley), and **CH2M HILL** (Anthony Krutsch, Linda Warren, Sandra Davis, Christie Szili, Marlena Guhlke, Jackie Dieterle) were in attendance to answer questions about the project and to understand the neighborhood perspectives.

Station Summaries from Presenters:

Station 1: Sound Abatement – Tony Krutsch:

We have been working on this project for the last couple of months to summarize what the public has told us. We heard that people are concerned about noise, that sound mitigation is a very important issue. We want to mitigate the sound from the roadway and maximize the benefits that we can. Sound evaluations, to be realistic, are based on current information, including posted speed plus speeds a little higher as well.

The project team has not yet done a noise analysis: no design is yet established, and we are still looking at the way the road might look (Station 5 *below* has ideas on design). We do have some ideas regarding questions that have been raised:

- We are considering and anticipate building a dense masonry block wall at least 6-foot high, a depressed roadway of 1- to 3-feet with a posted speed at 40 MPH, and turnouts for police to monitor.
- Traffic calming measures are to be included, and we are looking at what we can do to mitigate noise levels.

Station 2: Lighting – Marlin Brinkley:

- The team is anticipating bike lanes and pedestrian traffic; both activities need light for safety, but not so bright that it lights up backyards. The light will be approximately 1 foot-candle dropping to a ½-foot candle in some areas (example: Columbia Center is a 3-foot candle, so lighting on Steptoe is much more subdued).
- Lighting is to be uniform, subdued, and spaced closely so no dark areas are in-between. Height makes a difference: spill-over occurs if the lights are too high. If too low, there needs to be too many lights. What we want is lighting with no dark spots and no bright lighting.

- Placing all the lighting on one side is one technique, sometimes using a zig-zag, depending on the cross-section selected. Having all of the lighting on one side of the roadway would change the pattern.
- Staggering the lighting could give a slightly better pattern.
- Landscaping: Have to plan out the trees; street trees and street lighting don't go well together when the trees grow and block the lighting.
- Examples of good lighting options include Creekstone/Kellogg (30 to 45-foot high poles).

Station 3(a): Right-of-Way – Steve Plummer:

Concerns have been expressed that the existing right-of-way does not provide enough space for the road, and there will be a taking of property. No property acquisition is necessary within the Richland/Meadow Springs/Kennewick Park neighborhoods: the 100-foot right-of-way that exists is sufficient. Property acquisitions will only be needed south of Kennewick Park. There will be additional acquisitions required at the 5-Corners area. Access is existing on the Meadow Springs side and the team is looking at additional access from the Kennewick Park side.

Station 3(b): Traffic – John Deskins:

An Urban Arterial is defined as a four-lane, sometimes five-lane, roadway, with 15,000 to 30,000 vehicles per day. For the Steptoe Street extension, the number of lanes is under discussion by the project team. We do know:

- There will be no truck traffic except local deliveries.
- Speed is a difficult issue, but the design will use medians, landscaping, bike lanes, etc. to try to reduce speed. We anticipate posting at 40 MPH to match Steptoe north of Gage.
- Extensive traffic modeling has been done regarding congestion, and the traffic model shows much of the Richland and Kennewick area and key streets with daily traffic.

Station 4: Environmental – Marlena Guhlke:

The Steptoe Street Extension Project is undergoing a complete environmental review. Guidelines have to be followed from WSDOT and Federal Highway Administration, etc. The concerns brought to our attention by the public have received a particularly in-depth evaluation of issues.

- *Noise* has been discussed by Tony in Station 1.
- *Aesthetics/Visual Quality* concerns include impact of near and far views.
- Amon Creek should not be disturbed.
- *Sagebrush Protection*: Sagebrush will have to be removed where the roadway is.
- *Biological*: we are looking at animals, plants, wetlands/wasteway channel and protecting habitat in the area.
- *Economically Centered*: There are concerns about commuters getting to work easier; businesses getting customers into their businesses; property taxes; and promoting business development.

- *Cultural Resources:* The team is working with the Tribes regarding the disturbed property and possibility of finding items of tribal heritage which will need to be protected. Tribes are doing their own studies to be sure that they are satisfied.
- *Air:* We are conducting analyses, including air quality produced by vehicles and dust control during construction. The Cities are planning to look at these issues.

Station 5: Dan Kaufman – Potential Designs:

- To help with noise issues, the team is committed to:
 - a block wall of some type, a minimum of 6-feet in height.
 - a minimum of 1-foot (1- to 3-foot) depression of roadway which equals 7- to 10-foot with the wall.
- Speed: Traffic volumes, width of road, received much input from you tonight.
- A roundabout at Center Parkway for traffic calming.
- A median tends to naturally slow down vehicles and helps to keep speeds down.
- The road has a long stretch without intersections; design may incorporate a place for police enforcement in median for speed control.
- Putting existing power lines underground is not feasible due to the \$2 to \$4 million cost. Project budget and funding agencies would not support this option since it is considered aesthetic.
- Where to put poles?
 - One option is closer to the Kennewick Park side, but residents and the PUD don't like this option.
 - Placing them in the center median looks more feasible; high costs for this as well but it could be done within budget.
 - No decisions have been made. Design and relocation options are being considered.
- Landscaping/walkways: Bicycle paths in roadway.
- Lighting: Committed to less than typical high-density lighting in the residential areas.
- Access Points: one pedestrian access point retained on Meadow Springs side, and the team is talking to property owners about other potential access points.

COMMENTS FROM NEIGHBORS AT THE MEETINGS:

Neighbors raised a number of issues during the meetings. General comments included support for the project, and that it has been needed for a long time. Others expressed concern about the quality of the neighborhoods and that the project will affect the quiet, while benefiting everyone but the neighborhood affected because no roadway access is possible from the neighborhoods. Another noted that it is the City's job to facilitate growth and that equates to facilitating traffic flow, with as many lanes as will fit and a generous speed limit.

Other comments from the neighbors are organized below by topical areas:

Speed

- A 40 MPH (speed limit) seems excessive given the road is straight and there is no reason for traffic to observe caution. Like to see 35 MPH speed limit vs. 40 or 45, for noise and safety.
- Use a better design to assure that traffic will not speed and noise will be reduced.
- Use speed bumps to help keep traffic speed down.

Sound Abatement

- Would like to see minimum solid wall height of 8' to 10'.
- Concern about the depth of the roadway; the project team could do a study of effectiveness of various depths of road depression, e.g., if 2 ft is twice as effective as 1 ft, it's worth going a little deeper.
- Please spend the money needed to look at (noise) and alignment concepts (centered vs. westward).
- Some covenants require a stucco fence 4' high with 2' of railing above, and neighbors are concerned about where the sound wall will be placed, how much space there is going to be between fences and the wall, and how and by whom will the wall be maintained?
- When will the noise study be done?

Construction

- What are city regulations for construction operations? Daily operating hours? Weekends?

Traffic

- Neighbors wondered how many roundabouts are planned. Others did not want roundabouts at all.
- Which City will maintain road/barriers/landscape/monitor traffic/etc?
- Put in as many lanes as will fit and allow for a generous speed limit.
- Video traffic monitoring.
- Will there be a stop light near Columbia Center Estates?
- We hope to see an extension off Steptoe to Bellerive to allow Meadow Springs access to Steptoe without exiting first to Gage Blvd.

- At the entry into the Ridge subdevelopment (Canyon Pl), you need to remove the center island and add a left turn lane. The sightlines to the South on Steptoe from that location are marginal at best. At peak traffic times there is not enough sightline available to safely make the left turn into or out of the ridge.

Aesthetics

- Concern about lights being a problem to houses. Maybe shield lights on the house side.
- Place plants along the walls on the roadside for beautification and sound abatement.
- Move the poles and put the road down the middle. Lights down middle seem logical.
- Have a small median – maximize distance from walls to the road.
- No median – Place walkway and two-way bike path on Meadow Springs side and leave power lines alone.
- Like the design that leaves the existing power poles in place and moves the center of the roadway towards the Richland side.

Involvement

- Thank you for the excellent displays and meeting format. I would appreciate you continuing negotiating for pedestrian access from the Kennewick Park side. It seems you have addressed many of the concerns previously asked.

Environment

- What's the plan for continued environmental monitoring during construction (effectiveness of proposed measures) and plan for monitoring/assessment upon completion and in the longer term?
- Favor of a natural trailhead type of environment.

Funding

- What is the expected tax increase to Kennewick?

Next Steps

The team will start working on technical developments of the general and specific comments given tonight over the next six weeks or so and will then bring information at the next Public Meeting on August 17. Based on comments from the August Public Meeting, another Public

Meeting in late September will be held to describe the approximately 30% Design parameters. City of Kennewick and City of Richland will then work towards procuring funding to proceed with design and construction of the project.

Construction could begin as early as next year with the Steptoe Street Extension in service by 2008/2009.