

The West Eugene Collaborative

Comments for LTD's Scoping Process

October 25, 2007

The West Eugene Collaborative (WEC) is a broadly based community group concerned about transportation, land use and environmental issues and challenges in West Eugene. The WEC's hope is that it can contribute a unique perspective that reflects a range of interests and contributes to constructively resolving the challenging issues related to transportation in West Eugene.

The WEC is a group of about thirty civic leaders including government agency representatives, business leaders, environmental leaders and active at-large community members who have gathered over the last six months to discuss and envision the future of transportation and land use issues in West Eugene and nearby communities. The group has developed from a relatively grassroots base and has grown in size and importance over this time. The WEC is united primarily in its concern about the interconnected issues of transportation, land use and the environment in West Eugene and its desire to find solutions that are acceptable to most in our community.

The WEC is pleased to offer these comments, which are consensus recommendations from members who were able to attend the October 2007 meeting, about the scoping for the West Eugene EmX Extension Project.

Purpose

The WEC recommends that the purpose language be changed to reflect a stronger sense of the overall purpose of the project, to recognize that State plans play an important role in guiding land use and transportation, to explicitly capture the notion that economic redevelopment is important, and to be more explicit about environmental protection. With this in mind, we suggest the "Purpose Statement" read:

The purpose of the proposed West Eugene EmX Extension Project is to improve the convenience, reliability, attractiveness and increase the use of public transit in the West 11th Corridor (east/west); support local, regional and State plans, goals and guidelines for planning, land use and transportation; support economic development and redevelopment opportunities in the corridor; protect biodiversity, rare habitats, riparian areas, and other environmental resources; and obtain local public support.

Some of the language from the original purpose statement remains useful, but the WEC recommends it be considered in the Goals and Objectives section.

Proposed Goal

The WEC proposes that the goal statement be modified in one editorial and two substantive ways. The word “public” should modify transit. Second, there should be a goal to contribute to the reduction of the area’s carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions. Third, the language from the original purpose statement related to travel time, reliability, ridership, efficiency and effectiveness should be included as part of the goal statement.

Objectives

The WEC finds that certain objectives should be clearer and others should be added.

The objective for supporting desired land use patterns and development in the corridor is too vague; it is unclear what is considered “desired.” The WEC also believes that other objectives should be added that reflect community interests. Recommended additions are:

- Preserve the character and continuity of neighborhoods.
- Seek opportunities to support redevelopment and densification of existing low density commercial and industrial development.
- Provide for efficient connections to potential future EmX routes along the River Road and Highway 99 corridors.
- Avoid negative impacts to the Fern Ridge path and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety in the West 11th Corridor.

Concerns and Issues

The WEC understands that in this scoping phase, LTD has not presented criteria for how it will evaluate potential alternatives. As you know, the WEC is attempting to examine transportation in West Eugene comprehensively and transit is a component of the solution. In your review of alternatives, the WEC recommends that alternatives not be evaluated solely on how they affect transit, but in terms of the alternatives’ effect on the overall transportation and land use system.

Moreover, there are a variety of assessment criteria and impacts that deserve consideration. While the WEC has not had sufficient time to consider all criteria and impacts, the WEC’s environmental committee developed the following list, which we suggest be included in the NEPA review process:

1. change in carbon dioxide emissions;
2. interference with or enhancement of water flows upon which the wetlands are dependent;
3. change in energy consumption involved with construction and daily use;
4. runoff to water sources;

5. changes in encroachment upon or protection of parks and open space;
6. reduction, protection, or enhancement of rare habitats and biodiversity;
7. degradation or enhancement of riparian areas;
8. change in potential of damaging floods;
9. change in visual impacts;
10. change in aesthetics;
11. reduced or increased use of non-motorized transportation modes;
12. displacement/relocation of existing development;
13. change in single occupant vehicle trips;
14. change in noise and/or vibration and accompanying effects;
15. degradation or protection of social, cultural, historic or archeological resources; and,
16. environmental justice effects

Proposed Range of Alternatives

The WEC appreciates the desire to have a reasonable number of alternatives that meet the purpose and need. At this point, the WEC suggests three additional possibilities:

- Consider using West 7th and/or West 5th from Garfield to the vicinity of Seneca then turning south.
- Consider using West 10th and/or Stewart from Garfield to Bertelsen as an alternative modes alignment. (Examine this in the context of the community's possible redevelopment of West 11th as a multi-way boulevard.)
- Clarify that the Amazon Creek route will not negatively impact the Fern Ridge path and the riparian areas, and will primarily use previously developed parcels. (Consider in conjunction with enhancements to the Fern Ridge path including improved connectivity.) Rename the Amazon Creek alternative to "Southern Alignment."

The WEC looks forward to having further opportunities to review and comment on the evaluation of alternatives as the EIS process proceeds.

Appendix A

Membership of the West Eugene Collaborative

John Allcott*	Kitty Piercy*
Susan Ban	Emily Proudfoot*
Rick Crinklaw	Chris Pryor*
Rick Duncan	Larry Reed*
Ed Durkee	Rusty Rexius
Bill Fleenor	Jack Roberts*
Gerry Gaydos*	Tom Schwetz*
Rob Inerfeld*	Ollie Snowden
Ric Ingham	Charles Snyder*
Pat Johnston*	Paul Thompson*
Don Kahle*	Jim Welsh*
Bill Mahaffie	Gary Wildish
Kevin Mathews*	Sue Wolling*
Ed Moore	Jan Wostman*
Deborah Noble	Rob Zako*
Mary O'Brien*	

*Members who participated in the October 25, 2007 meeting where consensus on this document was reached. Because of their roles with LTD, Gerry Gaydos and Tom Schwetz participated in the discussion when called upon but were not among those who agreed to the recommendations by consensus.