SouthEast Connector Phase 2 Design - Community Working Group (CWG) Meeting #3

ATTENDEES:

CWG
Charles Johns
Franco Crivelli
Rae McElroy
Randy Walter
Scott Hall
Shannon Windle
Tom Judy
Tory Friedman
Troy Miller
Mitch Nowicki
James McCluskie

RTC
Garth Oksol
Jeff Hale
Michael Moreno

CH2M HILL
Cindy Potter
Leslie Bonneau
Matt Setty
Mark Gallegos
David Dodson

COPY TO: Lee Gibson; Doug Maloy; Alan Gubanich; Amy Cummings; Andy Bass; Anne Woodring; David Farley; Eddie Bonine; Geoffrey Schafler; Janet Phillips; Jim Nadeau; Kathleen Taylor; Leo Heuston; Lisa Mann; Lissa Butterfield; Lori Wray; Marge Frandsen; Margo Medeiros; Mike Kazmierski; Pat Gallagher; Phil Condon; Roger Frantz; Roger Jewett; Sue Golish; Val Martino; Valerie Anderson; Terri Thomas; Tray Abney

PREPARED BY: Mark Gallegos

DATE: April 18, 2013

PROJECT NUMBER: RTC Project No. 532013 / CH2M HILL Project No. 458732

On April 18, 2013, the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC) hosted the third Community Working Group (CWG) meeting for the SouthEast Connector Phase 2 Design (SEC) project. The meeting was held at the Associated General Contractors of Nevada (AGC) offices located at 5400 Mill Street in Reno, Nevada. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the CWG with an overview of the environmental components and studies being performed as part of the project, and how these influence the overall design of the SEC. The permit application requirements for the project were also reviewed; including a discussion on how the environmental studies being performed will be incorporated into the permit application process.

5-Minute Opportunity

Attendees were provided a "5-minute opportunity" to discuss any items of concern not included within the evening's agenda and suggest agenda topics for future CWG meetings. Items brought forward are as follows:

- Can we get an update on the Phase 1 construction activity? ***The team will provide a status update and overview of the Phase 1 construction at a future CWG meeting. Individuals may also subscribe to receive regular construction updates via email and obtain additional information regarding the project by visiting www.southeastconnector.com.***
- Request was made for additional information regarding the Alexander Lake Road overcrossing; particularly as it relates to how wild horses would be provided access within this area. ***The Alexander Lake Road overcrossing will have sufficient clearances to accommodate wildlife crossings under the structure. Wildlife, including wild horses, will continue to have access to areas on either side of the alignment which are currently accessible and not otherwise precluded by fencing on private property. The SouthEast Connector will not provide opportunities for wildlife access beyond what is currently available. Alexander Lake Road***

overcrossing will be discussed at the next CWG meeting, and fencing (wildlife and otherwise) will be discussed at an upcoming meeting.

- Phase 1 construction activity is impacting bike access and the current bypass is unsafe for bicyclists. ***The RTC will review the current traffic controls with the contractor to determine what accommodations might be implemented to alleviate bicycle safety concerns in this area.***
- Why is a connection from the SouthEast Connector to Mill Street not being considered? ***The Mill Street Extension is included in the 2035 RTP. As growth dictates this could be a future project of the RTC or other entity. The inclusion of this project was not a component of the SEC Phase 1 or 2 work. Additional information on the 2035 RTP can be found at www.RTCWashoe.com.***

5-Minute Opportunity items from March 21, 2013 CWG meeting:

- Request for status update on the proposed McCarran widening project. ***More information on the proposed widening of McCarran Boulevard from 4 to 6 lanes can be found at http://www.rtcwashoe.com/streetshighways/documents/SummaryReportCongestion.pdf#page=8. The proposed McCarran widening is also included within the traffic modeling road network used to evaluate the need and performance of the SouthEast Connector. Additional information can also be found on the 2035 RTP at www.RTCWashoe.com.***
- Request to address a petition generated in 1995 regarding the removal of the Mira Loma/Pembroke link from the Regional Transportation Plan– How have conditions changed? ***City of Reno Resolution 5241 dated June 11, 1996 amended the Reno Master Plan to remove the segment of the SouthEast Connector between Mira Loma and Pembroke. Traffic would be diverted from the SouthEast Connector between Mira Loma and Pembroke, west to McCarran Boulevard, and back onto the SouthEast Connector. In the late 1990's, the community experienced higher growth than was anticipated in the early 1990's and traffic demand for additional north/south capacity and an alternate route to McCarran and US 395 remained. The current Reno Master Plan, dated July 16, 2008, refers to the RTC's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which includes the SEC in its entirety, as well as the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, which also refers to the RTC's RTP. Subsequent City Council actions, including the sale of the alignment across the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course between Mira Loma and Pembroke have also occurred. Past resolutions do not bind subsequent Council actions.***
- Request for a more detailed event timeline for the development of the SouthEast Connector project from initial concept through current status. ***In response to this request, the RTC is currently developing a comprehensive timeline providing an overview of the major milestones throughout the development of the SouthEast Connector project. This timeline will be made available once completed.***
- Request for information regarding the status of the potential redesign of the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course. ***The potential redesign of the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course is outside of the RTC's jurisdiction and not included as part of the SouthEast Connector project. For additional information regarding the future plans for the Rosewood Lakes Golf Course, interested parties may contact Andy Bass at the City of Reno Department of Parks and Recreation, email bassa@reno.gov, phone (775) 334-4636.***

Project Website

A reminder was provided regarding the project website, www.southeastconnector.com. The website includes background information for the project; Phase 1 construction updates; status updates on the Phase 2 design, including maps and conceptual drawings; CWG meeting summaries; and contact information for the project, including a project "Hot Line" the public may call with questions or concerns. Questions submitted through the website and the project hot line are generally responded to by the next business day. Website visitors may also subscribe to receive weekly Phase 1 construction updates and submit questions and comments via the website.

March 28, 2013 Public Meeting

Leslie Bonneau provided a brief recap of the recent public meeting held on March 28, 2013 and provided the CWG with copies of the public meeting handouts which included an updated fact sheet, updated Frequently Asked

Questions handout, and a public comment form. The meeting was held at the Best Western Airport Plaza Hotel and had a good turnout with over 50 members of the public in attendance. CWG members were encouraged to attend future public meetings.

The team received a lot of valuable input from members of the public and feedback regarding the project was generally positive. There was also some opposition expressed to various components of the project and/or the project in general.

The team received feedback regarding public misconceptions due to a lack of information and/or misinformation being circulated regarding the project. In response to this feedback, the team will be looking for ways to step up outreach within the neighborhoods most affected by the project and will explore additional possible avenues to disseminate project information to area residents.

CWG Consensus Process

In response to a question raised during the previous CWG held on March 21, 2013, Leslie Bonneau provided an overview on how consensus would be determined with regard to CWG recommendations to the RTC.

Although there are many definitions and interpretations of consensus, for the purposes of CWG recommendations for this project, consensus will be viewed as existing on a continuum with the lowest common denominator on one end and total unanimity on the other. Consensus will generally be defined as the best possible decision that everyone can live with. The team recognizes that complete unanimity on this, or any project, is not likely going to occur, so when we talk about consensus we are not implying that everyone is in total agreement with everything that we are doing. The goal is to try and reach a level of comfort where we can live with the decision, despite the fact that we may not necessarily agree with certain aspects of the decision, so that the process can move forward. It is important to understand that everyone is going to need to make trade-offs and concessions in order to keep the process moving forward – no single individual or group, including the RTC, is going to get everything they want as part of this project. Consensus is not voting, majority rules, or unanimous agreement and should not be seen as a win/lose proposition. We all need to see the process as an opportunity to evaluate the trade-offs; find a way to work together toward the success of the project; determine how we might address the minority opinion and possibly mitigate these concerns; and ensure everyone has had the opportunity to participate and contribute to the process in a collaborative and meaningful way.

Environmental and Permitting

Matthew Setty/CH2M HILL, Environmental Design Manager for the project, led a discussion of the environmental components and studies being performed as part of the project and how these influence the design decisions for the SEC. An overview of the permit requirements for the project was also provided; including a discussion on how the environmental studies being performed will be incorporated into the permit application process. An alignment map showing the environmental footprint for the project was provided for reference. The map provided represented areas where it is anticipated the project will have some effect, including areas the project will impact as well as areas where work will be done to mitigate these impacts. A summary of the key discussion points is provided below.

Environmental Team Structure – The environmental team assembled to perform the requisite studies for the SouthEast Connector project includes biologists, geochemists, geologists, soils scientists, hydrologists, hydraulic modelers, botanists, archaeologists, and risk assessors. Additionally, the environmental team has access to specialists in other scientific and technical disciplines that are able to provide support as specific needs arise.

Regional Flood Ordinance Compliance – The project will comply with the regional flood ordinance which requires that fill material brought into the flood plain for construction of the project be mitigated by removing material elsewhere to provide appropriate flood storage; the team will also be required to demonstrate that the project will not raise flood pool elevations within the mapped flood plain. The team is developing a flood model to evaluate the performance of the proposed flood mitigation measures and demonstrate compliance with this ordinance. The design team is working closely with Washoe County, the Cities of Reno and Sparks, and the

Truckee River Flood Management Authority in the development of the flood model and the development of appropriate mitigation strategies.

In addition to meeting the ordinance's 1:1 mitigation requirements (i.e., for every yard of fill brought into the flood plain, a yard of material needs to be removed elsewhere within the project area to maintain overall flood plain storage capacity), the team will also need to demonstrate that the mitigation area where material is removed still functions in concert with the surrounding ecological system.

A more detailed discussion of the flood modeling being performed as part of this project and the proposed flood plain mitigation strategies will be provided at a future CWG meeting.

Soil Management Plan – A plan is being developed to safely handle soils within portions of the project area that have high concentrations of mercury as a result of historic mining operations. Additionally, the plan will address how biologically contaminated soils will be handled (e.g., soils contaminated with invasive plant species) and how to identify and address excavated material that may be unsuitable for use within the roadway fill. The goal of the soil management plan is to maximize the reuse of excavated material within the project while ensuring that the material is suitable for use in the construction of the roadway. Various methods may be employed to make excavated materials more suitable for use within the project and thereby minimize the amount of material that will require disposal, these methods may include chemically modifying soils, sterilizing soils that are contaminated with invasive plant species, and mixing of soils to change their physical properties and make them more suitable for use in construction. The Soil Management Plan will be included as part of the USACE 404 Permit Application.

Weed Management Plan – As part of the Weed Management Plan, weed mapping was performed identifying plant compositions and habitat types within the project area. This mapping work allows the team to determine types and locations of existing noxious weed infestations as well as information on what native plant species are doing well in the area. This information will be used to determine what treatment strategies should be employed to mitigate and minimize noxious weed infestations and identify the most appropriate seed mixes to use to reestablish vegetation in the areas disturbed during construction. It was noted that effectively controlling re-infestation will continue to be an ongoing challenge after the project is complete due to uncontrolled infestations of tall white top and other noxious weeds further south of the project area. The Weed Management Plan will include strategies for long-term maintenance of the roadway corridor to minimize re-infestation.

Some of the challenges faced in establishing native vegetation are due to historic, man-made changes to the Truckee River system and its tributaries. Early attempts at flood control within the Truckee Meadows contributed to erosion issues which lowered the elevation of the Steamboat Creek channel, eventually leaving high vertical banks and altering the vegetative habitats that existed adjacent to the creek. As part of this project, these vertical banks will be reshaped and stabilized, returning the creek to a more natural state and restoring some of the habitat that was lost. Reshaping these banks will also provide for improved flood water conveyance and increased flood storage capacity within the flood plain. Additionally, the ground surface level in some areas adjacent to the creek will be lowered as part of the flood plain mitigation. The lowering of the ground surface elevation will help to reconnect the creek with its natural flood plain and allow it to overflow its banks during smaller storm events which will help to restore the habitat that existed within the area prior to early man-made changes to the system and will allow native species to be more successful and create a habitat that is less suitable for invasive noxious weed species.

Yori Drain Water Quality Improvements – The project provides an opportunity to make improvements to the water quality within the Truckee River based on influencing the quality of the water being discharged from the Yori Drain. The Yori Drain has been listed by the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP) as an Impaired Water. The waters of the Yori Drain are high in fecal coliform (primarily due to water fowl populations) and high in pollutants from urban runoff.

The project provides an opportunity to create a wetland environment which is not impacted by Steamboat Creek and its associated mercury-contaminated sediments. This will be designed as a water quality treatment wetland to filter the Yori Drain discharge, reduce nitrogen and total dissolved solids, and provide overall passive water quality treatment prior to these waters being discharged to Steamboat Creek and then to the Truckee River. A

model is being developed to evaluate the overall performance of the proposed treatment wetland and its benefits to the overall water quality of the Truckee River.

Mercury within the Steamboat System – Previous studies performed within the project area collected soil samples at various depths and analyzed these samples to identify the presence of various constituents of concern, including mercury – the primary element of concern within the project area. This data has been entered into a modeling program called SURFER, which allows the team to statistically predict mercury concentrations within the project area. This allows the team to estimate the volume of contaminated material that will need to be mitigated within the project area as well as identify potential "hot spots" where mercury concentrations are at elevated levels that pose an increased risk to the surrounding environment. During the construction process, XRF (x-ray fluorescence) technology will be used to provide real-time sampling data of mercury concentrations in the field to verify that excavated material with high levels of mercury are handled appropriately during construction.

Mercury Encapsulation – Rather than excavating the contaminated soil and moving it to another location (creating a problem somewhere else), the team is proposing to encapsulate the contaminated soils underneath the roadbed and above the groundwater table. Encapsulating the contaminated soils in this manner significantly minimizes the potential for the mercury to leach out and reenter the surrounding environment, limiting future exposure. The process would involve excavating the contaminated soils, placing them within the area of the roadbed, and covering these soils with a sufficient amount of uncontaminated fill to effectively "lock" the contaminated soils within the roadbed.

Sources of Mercury Contamination – Mercury within the area is the result of both historic mining activities within the region and naturally occurring mercury from cinnabar formations above Hidden Valley and in the area of Geiger Grade. Cinnabar is the ore from which mercury is mined. Since there is naturally occurring mercury within the watershed and untreated historic contamination upstream of the project site, it would not be feasible to completely eliminate mercury contaminated soils. However, some of the hot spots that are present as a result of historic mining activity can be mitigated to reduce the risk of ecological contamination.

Elemental Mercury vs. Methylmercury – Elemental mercury found within the area is non-water soluble and does not readily infiltrate biological systems as long as it is in an area of high oxygen concentration. When placed within a low oxygen environment, bacteria within the environment will ingest the mercury and excrete it as methylmercury which is water soluble. In this form, it may more readily enter biological systems where it can accumulate over time and create health risks. To minimize the potential for mercury-methylation, the wetlands that will be created within the area will be facultative wetlands which go through cycles of saturation and drought throughout the year, versus obligate wetlands which remain saturated through all or most of the year and tend to be low in oxygen concentration due to biological processes.

NEPA Conformance – This project is subject to and in conformance with NEPA. The federal action related to this project is the USACE 404 Clean Water Act authorization. The USACE will conduct a NEPA review as part of the application review and permit decision. The RTC expects the USACE will make a finding of no significant impacts (FONSI) and will conclude the review with an Environmental Assessment (EA). Should the USACE review determine that there are significant project related impacts that cannot be adequately mitigated they may require an Environmental Impact Statement be prepared.

The RTC has developed a coordinated approach to the environmental analysis and documentation in anticipation of the permit submittal. Should the regulatory agencies request project modifications to further minimize impacts beyond what the RTC is proposing, additional engineering or environmental work will be undertaken to address those requests to allow the issuance of the appropriate permit.

The RTC plans to submit the Section 404 permit application to the USACE in July 2013 and anticipates receiving the permit, with its associated conditions, in November 2013.

Cultural Resources – Section 106 consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the USACE is required as part of this project. The team includes a group of archaeologists that is cataloguing artifacts and historic sites found within the project area, some of which may be eligible for the National Registry for Historic

Places. For those sites that are eligible, the team will develop mitigation strategies in coordination with SHPO. The cultural resources assessment and mitigation is also a component of the Section 404 permit application.

Native American Consultation – Native American consultation is also included as a component of the Section 404 permit application and approval process. The USACE will meet directly with the local Native American tribes to discuss any concerns they may have with the various elements of the project as they relate to Native American historic sites.

Required Permits – The permits required for this project and their associated documents and issuing agencies are as follows:

- Section 404 Clean Water Act Permit – USACE
  - Soil Management Plan
  - Weed Management Plan
  - Long-term Maintenance Plan
  - Biological Evaluation
  - Ecological Impact Assessment
  - Wetlands Mitigation Plan
  - Hydrology/Hydraulic Evaluation
  - Cultural Resources Assessment and Mitigation
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification – NDEP
  - Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)
  - Dust Control Plan
- Working in Waterways – NDEP
- Grading and Construction Permits – City of Reno and Washoe County

Additionally, a flood performance assessment and approval will be required by the flood plain managers of Washoe County, City of Reno, City of Sparks, and the Truckee River Flood Management Authority. The project team will be required to show that the project will not have adverse impacts to the flood pool in accordance with local flood ordinances. The project team is developing flood models in support of this assessment. These models will be discussed in more detail at a future CWG meeting.

The various permits will provide guidance on compliance requirements during construction as well as long-term monitoring and maintenance requirements.

Questions and Comments

Has the encapsulation method proposed for the mercury mitigation been implemented successfully elsewhere? ***To the best of our knowledge, this method has not been used specifically within a roadway project; however, it is a commonly used mitigation strategy within USEPA remediation sites.***

How do you know that you are excavating all of the mercury? ***Soils will be sampled using both XRF technology in addition to samples being sent out for laboratory testing. The data from the various testing will be correlated using the SURFER model to verify the areas of concern and ensure that soils in these areas are handled appropriately. It is important to keep in mind that there is naturally occurring mercury within the area, so it would not be feasible to completely eliminate mercury contamination within the project area. The focus will be the excavation/mitigation of soils with elevated levels of contamination within specific areas of the project.***

Can you explain XRF in a little more detail? ***XRF is a technology widely used in the mining industry. It is a X-ray Florescence instrument that allows a technician to "shoot" an object and obtain the chemical signature of the object based upon the wavelength of the energy that is being absorbed. XRF testing results are verifiably accurate and typically within a couple of percentage points of laboratory chemical testing results. XRF allows for real-time testing during excavation to allow for optimization of contaminated soil removal.***

What about the mercury that is within the creek? Will this be removed as well? ***The mercury that currently exists within the creek will remain in the creek and will be transported through the system and eventually deposited downstream. This project does not attempt to mitigate the mercury within the creek as we have no control over the mercury that is upstream. There was an estimated 40 metric tons of mercury deposited by the six mills that surrounded Little Washoe Lake over a period of about 30 years during the processing of silver and gold during the Comstock era. This mercury continues to be transported with sediment through the system. This project is not a remediation project for mercury clean-up; however, as part of the project, we will be providing long-term stability and transport of the mercury through the system in a predictable fashion. The combination of changing the hydrology within the creek system and stabilizing the banks greatly reduces the sediment loading and transport to the Truckee River and reduces the fluctuations that occur between high and low flow periods within the creek.***

Are you considering the water table under the roadway where the mercury is proposed to be encapsulated? ***Yes, although the mercury can technically be encapsulated below the water table, the team is taking a more conservative approach and will be encapsulating the mercury laden soils above the water table for an extra measure of safety.***

What materials are being used to encapsulate the contaminated soil? ***The contaminated soils will be buried within the roadbed under a sufficient amount of uncontaminated soil, in addition to the pavement, to minimize the potential for the mercury to reenter the surrounding environment.***

Can you provide us with references to other projects that have successfully implemented this type of contamination encapsulation? ***The team will put together a list of references for various case studies where similar methods have been employed for mitigation of soil contaminants and make this list available on the project website.***

Do regulatory agencies support the concept of mercury encapsulation under the roadbed? ***This concept has been presented to NDEP and the USACE; both of these agencies are supportive of this concept.***

Is there is risk of the mercury being picked up by the wind along with dust during excavation and transport? ***There will be a Dust Control Plan developed and implemented during construction to minimize this risk, both from the standpoint of worker safety as well as general environmental safety. Since we know where the highest concentrations of mercury are through our modeling efforts, we will take extra precautions in controlling dust when working in these areas. It is also important to note, that dust from the area is currently being blown around during high wind events, so there is already a risk of exposure via this avenue to the surrounding environment. The proposed mitigation efforts included within this project will help to reduce the existing risk over the long term.***

Is it true that the alignment may need to be moved? ***The current alignment reflects changes made during the alignment refinement process that took place earlier this year and "fine-tuned" the conceptual alignment previously developed. While the design will progress toward greater detail and refinement of the roadway facility, the current alignment is felt to be the optimal alignment for this corridor and is not anticipated to change.***

How can we submit comments or questions that arise in between meetings? ***Questions and comments may be submitted to Michael Moreno/RTC at mmoreno@rtcwashoe.com and through the project website at www.southeastconnector.com.***

Next Meeting: *Starting in May 2013, CWG meetings will be held on the second Thursday of each month. The next CWG meeting will be held on May 9, 2013 at 5:30 P.M.*