

SouthEast Connector Phase 2 Design: CWG Meeting No. 10, March 13, 2014

ATTENDEES:**CWG**

Andy Bass
Lissa Butterfield
Marge Frandsen
Roger Frantz
Troy Abney
Steve Driscoll
Brett Butler
Valerie Anderson

RTC

Garth Oksol
Michael Moreno

CH2M HILL

Cindy Potter
Leslie Bonneau
Mark Gallegos

COPY TO:

Lee Gibson; Jeff Hale; Amy Cummings; Alan Gubanich; Anne Woodring; Charles Johns; Clif Usher; Charles Johns; David Dodson; David Farley; Franco Crivelli; Geoffrey Schafler; Randy Walter; Janet Phillips; Jim Nadeau; Leo Heuston; Lynda Nelson; Lisa Mann; Lori Wray; Margo Medeiros; Matt Setty; Mike Kazmierski; Mitch Nowicki; Pat Gallagher; Phil Condon; Rae McElroy; Roger Jewett; Scott Carey; Scott Hall; Sue Golish; Terri Thomas; Nancy Vucinich; Tom Judy; Tory Friedman; Rae McElroy; Shannon Windle; Troy Miller; Val Martino; Resource Agency Committee; File

PREPARED BY:

Mark Gallegos

DATE:

March 13, 2014

PROJECT NUMBER:

RTC Project No. 532013 / CH2M HILL Project No. 458732

NOTE: The next CWG meeting will be scheduled after the USACE has made a 404 permit determination.

On March 13, 2014, the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC) hosted the tenth 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, Reno, Nevada. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the RTC's response to agency and public comments document submitted to the USACE on February 21, 2014.

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 topics for future CWG meetings. No new items were brought forward for discussion.

At a previous CWG meeting the design team was asked if there have been any other roadway projects that have sequestered mercury in the same manner as proposed for the SEC. In response to this question, the team identified a roadway project built in Portland, Oregon next to a river and adjacent to an old shipyard in an area with significant heavy metal soil contamination. While mercury in particular was not one of the elements of concern, the heavy metals that were sequestered under the roadway have many of the same properties and presented similar ecological risks to the surrounding environment. The techniques used on this project were successful and are similar to those proposed for the SEC.

Accessing Response to Comments Documents on the Project Website

Mark Gallegos/CH2M HILL provided an overview on how to access the Response to Public and Agency Comments documents on the project website. The documents have been posted to the project website at <http://www.southeastconnector.com/usace-permit-application/>. Visitors to the website have the option of downloading the response document in its entirety (154 MB); there are also links to download individual sections of the document. Download times will vary depending on the file size and internet connection speed; file sizes are noted next to each document link. The CWG was advised that they may contact Mark Gallegos through email or through the website if any assistance is needed in locating specific documents or if any issues are encountered when downloading the various documents.

Response Document Overview

Cindy Potter/CH2M HILL provided an overview of the response document format and sections. As part of the 404 permit application process, the USACE provided a 45 day public comment period. Comments received during this 45 day period were forwarded to the RTC for review and response on January 9, 2014. The USACE provided the RTC with 30 days to respond with an option to request an extension. Due to the volume of information and the technical nature of some of the comments received, the RTC requested an additional 15 days to prepare and submit responses. The formal response document was submitted to the USACE on February 21, 2014. The RTC's responses are currently under review by the USACE.

The response document is divided into sections addressing the comments received from each commenting agency and public comments. Each of the agency comments are presented within the document verbatim followed by the RTC's response. Public comments were sorted and categorized by topic and addressed based on the topic rather than individual comments. All comments received are included as attachments to the document. A spreadsheet was also developed to illustrate the types of comments received, who submitted the comment, and whether the comments were applicable to the current application, previous application, or both. Whenever possible, responses to both agency and public comments refer back to the 404 permit application to minimize duplication of information already available within the application; some public comment responses also refer back to information contained within responses to related agency comments.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) comments were primarily related to how the project would address mercury contamination within the project area. In addition to the response contained within the Response to Agency and Public Comments submitted to the USACE for review, the RTC and CH2M HILL hosted a teleconference on March 12, 2014 with the USACE, USEPA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Nevada Department of Environmental Protection to discuss the mercury issue in greater depth and answer agency questions.

In response to the comment received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding nesting and migratory birds, the project team has developed an Avian and Bat Protection Plan which has been included as an attachment to the Response to Agency and Public Comments document and is available for review on the project website.

Alternatives Analysis

At the request of the USACE, a more detailed Alternatives Analysis was developed and submitted for review. The alternatives evaluated within this analysis include alternatives previously evaluated by the RTC as well as alternatives the USACE requested be evaluated, including mass transit and a no-build alternative. The Alternatives Analysis submitted to the USACE was performed in accordance with the Section 404(b)(1) of the Clean Water Act. This analysis differs somewhat from a NEPA analysis in that rather than identifying a preferred alternative, the Section 404(b)(1) analysis evaluates alternatives to identify the "least environmentally damaging and practicable alternative" (LEDPA).

Special Use Permit Update

As noted in previous CWG meetings, the Special Use Permit was approved by the Reno Planning Commission in November 2013, the Planning Commission decision was appealed and subsequently upheld by the Reno City Council in December 2013. The project went before the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Commission on

March 12, 2014 and was found to be in conformance with the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan, thereby satisfying the required approvals under the Special Use Permit.

Truckee River Flood Project Coordination

On March 13, 2014 the RTC met with the Truckee River Flood Management Authority (TRFMA) and their hydraulics consultant. The RTC was advised that the TRFMA's review of the SEC project's hydraulic modeling by their consultant confirms that the SEC will not negatively impact the Flood Project. This information will be presented to their board on March 14, 2014.

FEMA Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR)

The project team is in the process of preparing the CLOMR for the project as requested by the City of Reno. The CLOMR is anticipated to be completed and submitted to the City of Reno for forwarding to FEMA in April 2014. The CLOMR is necessary to address the rise in flood surface elevations between the new roadway and Steamboat Creek. As previously discussed with the CWG, these rises are isolated within areas away from developed or developable parcels. The CLOMR is one of the conditions for the City of Reno Special Use Permit approval.

Phase 2 Design Update

The design team has been working with the CMAR contractor (Granite Construction) on the development of an opinion of probable construction cost (OPCC), which is part of the process of negotiating a guaranteed maximum price (GMP) for the construction of the project.

90 percent design review comments were received from the reviewing agencies (Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County) in February and the design team is currently working on addressing these comments and incorporating them within the 100 percent design documents. Responses to design comments will be provided to the reviewing agencies to ensure that the team is addressing the comments to the satisfaction of agency staff. The 100 percent design is anticipated to be ready for internal Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) review at the end of March 2014. Once the USACE issues its determination on the 404 permit, and if the permit is approved, the design team will work on incorporating any permit conditions into the construction plans and specifications.

Miscellaneous Questions and Comments

Will the USEPA also be reviewing and making a determination regarding the 404 permit? As a commenting agency, the USEPA will be providing input and guidance to the USACE regarding some aspects of the project; however, the USACE is the jurisdictional permitting agency and will make the ultimate determination with regard to issuance of the 404 permit. Note should also be made that the comment letter submitted by the USEPA to the USACE on October 28, 2013 recommending denial of the permit was conditioned on whether the RTC would be able to adequately address their concerns and provide the additional information requested – this is being done through the Response to Public and Agency Comments document as well as additional discussions with the regulatory agencies.

Will the Nevada Land Trust still be overseeing the implementation of the Conservation Easement? The RTC legal team and CH2M HILL are evaluating the proposed conservation easement as well as other mechanisms that might be employed to dedicate and deed restrict the open space within the project corridor and determine how best to provide ongoing monitoring and maintenance of this open space. The RTC's intent is to ensure that the most appropriate mechanism is employed for protecting the floodplain from future development and providing ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the mitigation wetlands.

There has been a document circulating discussing the potential for a connection to be provided from the new roadway to Clean Water Way, is this something that is now being considered? A property owner went before the RTC Board and requested that the RTC look at the possibility of dedicating Clean Water Way as a future Mill Street extension and providing connections from the SEC to Clean Water Way. The Board directed staff to provide additional information regarding this possibility as well as conceptual layouts to determine if a connection to Clean Water Way was possible and what this connection might look like. CH2M HILL was asked to develop concepts for a possible connection and perform an initial evaluation of the pros and cons for such a connection. The conceptual design and analysis performed determined that the current SEC project, as

designed, does not preclude a possible future connection. However, there are no plans to include a Clean Water Way connection as part of this project. Note should be made that the conceptual designs developed were strictly based on standard roadway geometry considerations and did not take into consideration hydraulics within the floodplain and potential mitigation measures that would be required.

With the recent flood in Colorado washing out a highway, what assurances do we have that the same type of event couldn't happen here; thereby releasing mercury-contaminated soil back into the surrounding environment? The hydraulic velocities experienced during the recent Colorado flood that washed away a highway were extremely high due to the high volume of rainfall being funneled down steep, narrow canyons, producing high-velocity flows. Due to the topography of the SEC corridor, which is relatively flat, velocities within the flood pools during large storm events are significantly lower than those experienced in the Colorado flood; therefore, the probability of this type of failure of the SEC roadway during a 117-year flood event would be very small. Additionally, an extensive hydraulic scour analysis was performed and areas of the SEC roadway which were found to be susceptible to scour at various flood levels are being designed with appropriate armoring to minimize this risk.

Note was made that the design team is currently working to develop an animated video "fly-over" of the project to help the public better visualize how the project will look after construction. This video will be made available on the website once it is completed and presented at the next public meeting which will be scheduled after the USACE has made a determination on the 404 permit application.

Phase 1 Construction Update

Construction of Phase 1 is currently anticipated to be completed in late summer/early fall 2014. The northbound concrete deck for the Veterans Memorial Bridge has been completed with the southbound bridge deck approximately two-thirds completed. Concrete barrier and pedestrian hand rails are being installed on the Veterans Memorial Bridge. The Clean Water Way Bridge has been completed and the roadway embankment between the two bridges is being graded to its final configuration with bioswales and the multiuse path also roughed-in. The existing radio towers and control buildings south of Clean Water Way have been razed and the new radio towers and control building north of Clean Water Way are now fully operational. With the radio tower relocation completed, crews have been able to begin construction of the roadway embankment south of Clean Water Way.

The RTC is currently in the process of reaching out to area veterans groups to put together a working group, similar to the CWG, to help develop a possible veteran's memorial and aesthetic treatments for the new Veterans Memorial Bridge over the Truckee River.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

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