



**CHARLESTON OREGON SOLUTIONS PROJECT TEAM
MEETING NOTES—May 27, 2008**

The Charleston Oregon Solutions Project Team met for the third time on May 27, 2008 in the OIMB Dining Hall from 9:00 a.m. to noon. The following members and interested parties were present:

Senator Joanne Verger
Representative Arnie Roblan
Steve Bryant, Oregon Solutions
Betsy Boyd, UO Federal Affairs
Martin Callery, Port of Coos Bay
Joyce Croes, OIMB
Steve Denney, ODFW
Ann Donnelly, Coos Historical and Maritime Museum
Robin Elledge, South Slough
David Ford, Charleston Community Enhancement Corporation
Mike Graybill, South Slough
Nancee Hunter, OSU Sea Grant Program
Andy LaTomme, OPRD
John Opitz, South Coast Development Corp
Karen Scheeland, UO Public and Government Affairs
Rusty Shield, Charleston Merchants Association
John Souder, Coos Watershed Association
Dennis Turowski, Bureau of Land Management
Kathy Westenskow, Bureau of Land Management
Niki Whitty, Coos County Board of Commissioners
Craig Young, OIMB

Following self-introductions Steve Bryant summarized the previous meeting and circulated a document from the Charleston Merchants Association listing their many activities promoting the Charleston area. In addition, copies of Draft #2 of the Project Description were circulated. Anne Donnelly asked several questions about the objectives of the project and suggested that the first few sections appear inconsistent in terms of the vision for enhancing Charleston and the actual project description. She also raised questions about what the expectations were for the final results of the project. Discussion followed summarizing the previous two meetings (documented in previous meeting notes). Rep. Roblan commented that a primary outcome will be to focus on the added value that co-location of the agencies will have on the area. A likely consequence of failure of the project is the loss of some agencies within Charleston. Interest was

expressed again about attempting to document the economic impacts that the partner agencies contribute to the Charleston area. Anne suggested that the group focus on possible synergistic outcomes. OCEAN's prior planning effort for the area was mentioned as a good reference document.

Steve Bryant referred to the original Oregon Solutions assessment and its focus on the "Coast Life Science Center" as an integrated project combining the need for office co-location with a significant marine-oriented research and visitors' element. Since that time, the group has focused on examination of all of the public lands surrounding the OIMB campus and breaking the project into at least three phases in order to address property availability issues, immediate space needs, and other sequential issues.

Anne expressed concerns that OIMB and South Slough are perceived by people in the community as "elitist" and, thus, the project needs to have an organic relationship with the community and be readily accessible and visible. She asked about whether there had been an adequate examination of Port properties and other private properties along Cape Arago Highway near the center of Charleston. Several members of the Siting Committee responded with a summary of their examination of Port properties and other potential sites after which they had concluded that most or all of these other sites had significant limitations. In addition, the Port had indicated that their space was extremely limited for their own needs.

In response to the "elitist" perceptions, Craig Young agreed that this has always been a problem in Charleston, but that they are making progress through numerous outreach efforts that are increasing local public involvement in their activities. He sees this project as a huge step in furthering those outreach efforts and bridging connections to the community. Sen. Verger mentioned how the Hatfield Marine Science Center has accomplished the same thing in Newport. Rep. Roblan offered that this might be easier in Newport due to OSU's land grant status and its expansive services to rural Oregon.

Ron Opitz indicated his support of Charleston. Referring to the project description, he said that Charleston is a fishing village but it is so much more than a fishing village. He also objected to the term elitist and suggested that OIMB has to have an edge to recruit the finest to come here to study. "We need to be above this to attract the right people to study but we need to stay connected to the community."

Craig Young mention that there is another aspect to this economy that is the research and education facility. Betsy Boyd said that we should consider the huge economic multiplier effect of grant and research dollars that come to OIMB. Anne suggested that we need to explicitly state this economic activity in the program statement.

Nancee, again referring to Newport, mentioned OSU's visitor's center that welcomes the public. She reminded the group that we are creating a public facility and that having an extension agent at the new facility in Charleston will really help with the public's connection to the project.

Next, the group returned to the work of the Siting Committee. The Group focused on potentially available public property. The Port property is pretty constrained. The RV park is largest income generator for the Port. Other vacant sites examined included the Marina storage units area, University properties and the Coast Guard Housing facility. Comments from Coast Guard representatives have led the group to assume that this site is open for consideration provided that suitable replacement facilities are identified and Congress approves the relocation—all of which would require considerable time and funding. The committee discussed using OIMB land to start to meet the agencies' shorter term need for office space. It will take at least two years to get something done. Not all the functions have to be in one building and there is the possibility of more than one structure. The visitor center functions of space, water, view and kitchen, and attractions are different from the agency office and research space needs. The project might be broken into three phases: Phase I - the public display across the street from OIMB; Phase 2 - agency offices with community components; and Phase 3 - a visitor center. Points made were that the Coast Guard property would be ideal for the Phase 3 visitor center. Phase II, the offices, should have a public function also. A piece of high ground on OIMB land is a possibility for Phase 2. There is no management plan for the headland.

The discussion then turned to parking. The Biggest weekend event in Charleston is the Seafood festival. From 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. it is basically gridlock. Anne asked if maybe the Port could look at other land for meeting peak parking demands while freeing up other property for buildings and turning the marina into less of a "carscape". Martin Callery responded that the Port master plan was passed just last year. Commercial fishing is volatile. Currently, 65% of their revenue is recreational fishing and boating. The Port is looking at expanding moorage and has not ruled out acquisition of additional property for future building and parking expansion. Others offered that the current parking is important to the marina users and that there would be little support for moving a significant amount of parking away from the businesses, boat launch area, and docks. Martin also reported that the Port is trying to keep the master plan flexible. As a public agency, the Port needs to be able to respond to changing market conditions, but they do not have additional acreage to accommodate a facility of this kind. The Port believes in this concept and is willing to work with the group. At same time, the Port has to keep an eye on it's own mission.

The group then recessed for a tour of the U of O's property next to the Coast Guard housing complex. A rough loop trail was constructed through the property in the previous week for purposes of providing a close-up perspective of this site.

The group reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

Steve asked the group to react to the advantages and/or disadvantages of further exploring this site as a part of Phase 2 of the project. Comments included: It is zoned forest land, elevated, distant from but with impressive views of the water, with ravines on two sides. It would have to have a visitor component, for example a scenic viewpoint, trails, meeting space, and deck all the way around. It is too extravagant for agency offices, but not large enough to encompass both office and all of the visitor functions. It

could be a tsunami emergency evacuation site. It should be evaluated for fault lines. There may be issues with federal funding if below the tsunami zone. Sough Slough has a space evaluation that could be used as a model.

Rep. Roblan mentioned the possibility of adding classroom space above the Tsunami zone as well as providing a place of retreat for public safety purposes. He also suggested using this building and its views to house a display to help orient building users and visitors to the surrounding environment. David echoed the advantages of this site as offering a great scenic viewpoint. Sen. Verger said that an attractive building on this site would attract visitors and organizations from Coos Bay into Charleston.

Betsy Boyd emphasized the potential value of having activities located above the tsunami zone. She also asked if the group had considered a land swap with the Coast Guard. The answer was yes.

Steve asked if the group should form a building users group consisting of the Co-conveners and potential building occupants. Volunteers for this committee were: Sen. Verger, Rep. Roblan, Mike Graybill, Craig Young, Steve Denney, John Souder, Rusty Shield, Betsy Boyd, and Anne Donnelly.

Betsy Boyd and Craig Young offered to begin a discussion with University officials regarding the process to consider possible utilization of a portion of the University's property.

Craig Young encourage the group to get some kind of fix on how the Coast Guard property factors into the overall project description, especially Phase 3. The University's approach to the concept of development on the U of O property may be conditioned on prospective future ownership of current Coast Guard facility.

The next meeting date of the Project Team will be on June 23, 1:00 p.m., at OIMB.