

## March 30, 2004 Florence Open House Comments and Responses Grouped by General Category

82 filled out comment forms were received by staff at the Open House. Many of the comment forms contained several comments addressing different issues. The specific comments and questions have been grouped together by general category below. The number in parentheses indicates the number of times the comment, or substantially the same comment, was noted.

### SAFETY

#### GENERAL

- Anything ODOT can do to improve, enhance, or provide better safety along Hwy 126 will be appreciated.
- Hwy 126 is a very dangerous road from Eugene to Florence. (4)
- The safety priority should be moved up the ladder of importance.
- Traffic problems have existed for many years and the casino is not the cause.
- Increased traffic could cost lives.
- What is ODOT's prediction of the fatality rate on Hwy 126 between Florence and Eugene after casino opens?

**Highway safety is a top priority for ODOT. Available resources are not sufficient to address all safety issues on the 7,500 miles of state highways and roads. Highway sections are ranked statewide on the Safety Priority Index System (SPIS), and the worst ten percent of crash locations are those typically reviewed for possible improvements using limited safety funding. There is one top 10 percent SPIS site along the OR 126W corridor (Florence – Eugene Highway), located at the intersection of OR 126W and US 101. Improvements to the 126/101 intersection were completed during 2002.**

**OR 126W scheduled projects include improving the Badger Mountain passing lanes, scheduled for spring of 2005. The state is also currently replacing bridge rail and replacing existing and adding new guard rail as part of a repaving project in the corridor between mileposts 26 and 33. Similar work is programmed between mileposts 14 and 26, for the year 2006.**

**ODOT cannot predict future fatalities. Fatality rate tables have been developed based on past fatalities, type of highway and traffic volumes. This data is often used to compare highway segments to the state average to help identify problem corridors and determine project priorities. The state-wide average fatality rate for rural, non-freeway, state highways is 2.84 fatalities per million vehicle miles. The fatality rate for the OR 126W corridor, based on the most recent three year crash data is 1.64 fatalities per million vehicle miles.**

**A comprehensive highway safety study of the OR 126W corridor is programmed for spring/summer 2004. The data, analysis, and recommendations from this study will**

**be a useful tool to inform project programming decisions for future improvements in the corridor.**

### DRIVING

- Difficulty turning into access drive from highway due to inattentive drivers.
- During good weather it is almost impossible to enter 126 from North Fork Rd. and a left turn from North Fork to 126 is suicide.
- Senior citizens have to drive to Eugene for doctor's appointments and do not look forward to the increased traffic from the casino.

**Left turns to and from the highway are the most difficult maneuvers to make. New approaches to the highway are located to be as safe as practical by maximizing visibility and driveway separation. Private land and development patterns, topography, and other factors have historically influenced driveway location choices. Local jurisdiction public streets, shared drives, and private frontage roads are several of the strategies used to address this issue.**

**The alternative to making a left turn onto OR 126 from North Fork Road is to travel north on Munsel Lake Rd. and turn left at US 101, then make the protected left turn at the 101/126 signal to travel east toward Eugene.**

**The North Fork Bridge replacement project is analyzing alignment of the North Fork/126 intersection and this intersection may be improved as part of the bridge replacement project.**

### ENFORCEMENT

- Will there be increased patrols on Hwy 126 with the increase in traffic?
- Need more police patrol targeting hazardous violations (excessive speed, following too closely, bad passing). (2)

**OSP is planning on hiring 40 Troopers on September 1, 2004 to fill vacancies created by retirements. While a decision has not yet been made as to where these Troopers would be assigned, OSP is very aware of the staffing shortages at Florence.**

**As OSP begins budget preparation for the 05-07 biennium the Department will explore the possibilities of funding for additional Trooper positions in hopes of restoring some of the positions lost to budget cuts in the current biennium.**

**A comprehensive highway safety study of the OR 126W corridor is programmed for spring/summer 2004. The data and analysis from this study will be a useful tool to inform decisions about increased patrolling in the corridor.**

## SPEED REDUCTION

- Nothing seems to slow traffic speeds here or anywhere else.
- Cushman to 2 Mile marker – 50 mph (2)
- East of North Fork Bridge – 45 mph
- East of North Fork Bridge – 40 mph
- North Fork Bridge – 35 mph (3)
- City Limits – 30 mph (3)
- West of casino driveway to Cushman – 40 mph
- Have already had a fatality at North Fork/126 so see what happens with reduced speed.
- Please lower the speed coming west into Florence. Cars zoom by Spruce and 126. (2)
- Let people know traffic is to slow down coming west on 126 into the residential area.
- Speed at Cushman is 50, then goes to 55 mph, then 45 mph – too fast.
- Lower the speed at the North Fork bridge. No reason for the speed on the bridge and coming into town – very dangerous.

**As a result of this public input, ODOT has initiated a speed zone investigation request for this area, and the data collection for the study will take place this summer. When an investigation is conducted, the roadway is surveyed for widths, surface, lanes, roadside development and other factors. Spot speed checks are conducted, recording the speed of at least 75 vehicles in each travel direction. The speed at or below which 85 percent of the drivers travel is one nationally recognized factor proven by repeated studies as a fair and objective indication of safe and reasonable speeds. A report is then prepared detailing existing conditions and proposed changes. ODOT's recommendation for the speed zone is then reviewed by the city if the highway is within the city limits. Disagreements between local jurisdictions and ODOT are referred to the Speed Zone Review Panel for final decision.**

**From the pamphlet "Speed Zoning: Who Decides?" printed by ODOT:**

**"Studies show that traffic moving at a speed that is reasonable for the road and weather conditions results in fewer accidents. Drivers are more patient because a reasonably uniform speed allows progress with less passing, less delay and fewer rear-end collisions. Many people believe that lowering posted speeds will mean fewer accidents, but studies do not prove this. Unrealistically low speeds frustrate many drivers, resulting in numerous speeding violations and unsafe driving, actually causing more accidents.... Drivers lose respect for the law, and police and courts are overloaded with increased traffic tickets."**

**For more information see: [www.odot.state.or.us/traffic/speed.htm](http://www.odot.state.or.us/traffic/speed.htm)**

## HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

### CORRIDOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

- When are road improvements on Hwy 126 planned?
- Hwy 126 needs to be improved on all sections.
- Highway congestion, safety problems, narrow shoulder width, sharp curves are problems that will be aggravated by casino traffic.
- Hwy 126 will need significantly more maintenance to handle extra flow of traffic to the coast.
- What is going to be done to mitigate impacts of higher traffic flow on Hwy 126 between Florence and Eugene?
- For Hwy 126, Mapleton to Veneta
  - Add rumble strips to center of highway and along sides. (2)
  - Add road-side reflectors, especially at curves. (2)
  - Widen the road at curves.
  - More turn-outs. (2)
  - Eliminate cellular dead spots.
  - Add reflective line painting. (2)
  - Add signage where ice forms.
  - Add 'ticklers' in tunnel to signal trucks too close to tunnel walls.
  - Add signage for blind spots.
  - Improve passing lanes in mountainous sections. (4)
  - Center lane reflectors are crucial to see the highway between Florence and Eugene.
- Use the \$77 million for the Biway (West Eugene Parkway ?) to make Hwy 126 two lanes in each direction, or to add pull-offs and turn lanes.

**OR 126W scheduled projects include improving the Badger Mountain passing lanes, scheduled for spring of 2005. The state is also currently replacing bridge rail and replacing existing and adding new guard rail as part of a repaving project in the corridor between mileposts 26 and 33. Similar work is programmed between mileposts 14 and 26, for the year 2006.**

**A comprehensive highway safety study of the Hwy 126W corridor is programmed for spring/summer 2004. The data and analysis from this study will be a useful tool to inform decisions about the type, timing, and cost sharing of safety improvements such as center line rumble strips, shoulder widening, and turn-outs.**

**The Lane County Board of Commissioners prioritizes future construction projects on the state highway system in Lane County, and forwards those priorities to ODOT Region 2 and the Oregon Transportation Commission for funding consideration.**

**ODOT pays for highway maintenance of the state highway system with state and federal gas tax revenue. Gas tax revenue is generated by road users.**

### SITE SPECIFIC

- The sharp corner at the Hwy 36/Hwy 126 junction in Mapleton needs to be fixed.
- Will ODOT be making more passing lanes on 126? If yes, when?
- What are the County and ODOT planning to do to make the North Fork/126 intersection safer between now and when the bridge project is constructed in 2009? It is dangerous now and most casino traffic will go through the intersection. How about a traffic light?

**The Lane County Board of Commissioners prioritizes future construction projects on the state highway system in Lane County, and forwards those priorities to ODOT Region 2 and the Oregon Transportation Commission for funding consideration. Currently, there are no plans to improve the stop controlled intersection at OR 126 and Hwy 36.**

**ODOT has a project to improve the Badger Mountain passing lanes, scheduled for spring of 2005.**

**A traffic light is not being considered for the OR 126W/North Fork Rd. intersection. Casino traffic will be directed to the planned primary site access on OR 126, west of the 126/North Fork intersection. Casino traffic is not anticipated to make turn movements at the 126/North Fork intersection.**

### FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Who will pay to make the highway safe?
- How will ODOT guarantee to the taxpayers that the tribe will pay their fair share for road improvements?
- What road improvements are planned on Hwy 126, and who will pay for them – Oregon taxpayers or the tribal casino? (4)
- All improvements to Hwy 126 and 126/North Fork Rd. must not include taxpayer dollars – total cost should be casino's responsibility.
- How much of future maintenance work on the road will the tribe be obligated to pay?
- Hwy 126 has been financially short changed compared to other highways, but casino will be catalyst for improvements because more people will use the highway. (2)
- How is the Governor's Compact with this tribe assuring that they will pay for Highway 126 improvements including the 126 bridge at North Fork road?
- The tribe should pay for all improvements necessary to make 126 safe for the target audience in Eugene-Springfield.
- Will the Governor assure us that the casino will pay for all improvements necessary to make the highway safe?
- Will the casino have to pay their fair share, like tax payers, for Hwy 126 improvements?

**Highway system improvements are typically paid for by transportation system users through state and federal gas tax revenue.**

**In accordance with the State/Tribal Compact, the Tribes intend to construct a full-movement highway approach from OR 126W to access the development site. As with any development, the cost of highway improvements for the driveway that serves private development is the responsibility of the developer. The construction cost of the improvements for the Hwy 126 approach, including the left turn lane and the right turn lane, is the responsibility of the Tribes. The cost of a future signal at this location, or any other form of acceptable traffic control (e.g. roundabout, interchange) will also be the responsibility of the developer.**

**A comprehensive highway safety study of the OR 126W corridor is programmed for spring/summer 2004. The data and analysis from this study will be a useful tool to inform decisions about the type, timing, and cost sharing of corridor safety improvements.**

## **NORTH FORK BRIDGE PROJECT**

### *GENERAL*

- Replacement Project should add width for bicycle traffic (lots of bikes in summer).
- Do bridge project and Hatch Tract traffic control as a single integrated project now.
- Widen the North Fork bridge to carry more traffic when upgrades are done in the future. (2)
- Add lighting to North Fork bridge and North Fork/126 intersection.
- The bridge replacement project is very needed and urgent for safety reasons and will be beneficial to the whole community. (2)
- Need a right turn deceleration lane on North Fork Bridge with or without the casino, and traffic calming on the east end of the bridge to slow drivers down.
- How can this much improvement be done without filling in part of the river and wetlands?
- Entire family supports the bridge project, with wider shoulders.
- Supports North Fork bridge project. (3)

**The North Fork Bridge replacement project is programmed for construction in 2006-2007. The project is proposed to replace the existing two lane structure with a new two lane structure with standard width shoulders, which also serve as rural highway bike lanes. Other improvements such as a right turn deceleration lane to North Fork Rd., and options for bridge and intersection lighting are to be analyzed as part of project development. The existing bridge spans the river between two 'fingers' of fill material that were placed in the estuary when this bridge was originally constructed in 1960. Because of the additional shoulder width, improvements to the left turn lane, and possible construction of a right turn deceleration lane, additional fill may be required. ODOT will work with the resource regulatory agencies to determine mitigation for environmental impacts.**

## CASINO

- Would the improvements on Hwy 126 at North Fork be done if there were no casino?
- How much of the planned bridge replacement is due to the presence of a casino and what percentage does this represent? (2)

**Improvements at the OR 126/North Fork Rd. intersection are being analyzed as part of the North Fork Bridge project. This analysis would have occurred with or without casino development.**

**The planned bridge replacement is due to structural problems with the aging bridge constructed on wooden pilings and is NOT related to the proposed casino in any way.**

## CASINO ACCESS

### LOCATION

- A driveway directly off of Hwy 126 is superior for traffic flow and a safer situation for both customers and passers by.
- In favor of driveway from Hwy 126. (21)
- What is driving the need for a casino entrance from Hwy 126?
- Main entrance on Hwy 126 will cause traffic to back up for a mile.
- Keep Hatch Tract entrance on North Fork Rd.

**Having the primary access on OR 126W produces the best operation (lowest volume-to-capacity ratio (v/c)) at North Fork/126, and creates a safer entrance/exit situation to the Casino in terms of sight visibility for turning movements. Vehicles entering the site are not anticipated to back up beyond the storage distances in the left turn lane or the right turn deceleration lane. Excessive queuing will be monitored and is one of the triggers for a traffic signal.**

### IMPROVEMENTS

- Put in the traffic light now at the Casino entrance on Hwy 126. (3)
- Curb, gutter, and sidewalk at the 126 entrance and into town would add appeal.
- Use North Fork Rd. approach for emergency purposes.
- No access from Coastal Highlands. (2)

**A traffic signal on OR 126W at the casino entrance does not meet approval warrants given existing traffic and projected day of opening casino traffic. Traffic operations at this location will be monitored on an ongoing basis, and traffic control (such as a signal) will be installed by the developer as conditions warrant.**

**The North Fork Rd. approach is anticipated to be the secondary, emergency access and no access is anticipated from Coastal Highlands Dr.**

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Who is paying for all the road improvements related to the casino?
- Is the casino going to pay for highway improvements related to casino access? What is the normal practice for developers? (3)
- The Hwy 126 driveway improvements are not at the taxpayers expense.

**It is the normal practice for a developer to pay for improvements related to access to the development site. The State/Tribal Compact provides that the Tribes will pay such costs. The cost of casino access is the responsibility of the Tribes.**

TRAFFIC

- Tribe did a great job on their traffic study and the project will be a success.
- Tribes' traffic study shows North Fork problem will become worse with main entry on Hwy 126.
- Most concerned about highway safety with huge increase in trips. Casino locations in California have seen huge increases in fatal and injury accidents on the rural two lane highways after casinos opened.

**Having the primary access on OR 126 produces the best operation (a lower volume-to-capacity ratio (v/c)) at North Fork/126 than the North Fork access, and creates a safer entrance/exit situation to the Casino in terms of sight visibility for turning movements.**

**A comprehensive highway safety study of the OR 126W corridor is programmed for spring/summer 2004. The data and analysis from this study will be a useful tool to inform decisions about the type, timing, and cost sharing of corridor safety improvements.**

**LANE COUNTY**

MUNSEL LAKE AND NORTH FORK ROAD TRAFFIC

- How will Munsel Lake Rd. residents and children's play ground be protected with a 35% increase in forecast traffic from casino?
- What is being done to protect Munsel Lake Rd. residents' 25mph zone and the playground?
- What is the County going to do to restrict casino traffic from using Munsel Lake Rd/North Fork Rd. to get to Hwy 126?

**Munsel Lake Rd./North Fork Rd. are public roadways under the jurisdiction of Lane County. Drivers on public roads are responsible for obeying traffic laws and**

**driving in a safe manner. Residents in the area are represented by Lane County and/or the City of Florence. There will be no Casino directional signs in the ODOT right-of-way directing traffic to Munsel Lake Road from US 101. With the Casino's primary access to OR 126, it is unlikely that visitors will utilize Munsel Lake Road or North Fork Road. Lane County is the approving authority for the North Fork Rd. approach.**

## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

### ODOT

- Keep up the good work!
- The Cape Creek tunnel project is a good idea.

**Thank you.**

### ECONOMICS

- Improvements to Hwy 101 and Hwy 126 will enhance the community.
- The casino is a customer to other businesses.
- Employment is necessary for growth and to maintain the Florence quality of life.
- Casino brings jobs, health benefits and reinvestment in the community, which will enrich the area 10-fold.
- Full supporter of casino. Increase in jobs and revenue to Florence is a plus.
- Casino will be a benefit to Florence. (2)
- The casino will be a positive move for Florence to help support existing business and tourism as well as provide jobs and opportunities for locals. (4)
- Many Florence residents look forward to this exciting asset to the community.
- A casino similar to this went in by my home in Washington state and brought much good to our area.
- This economic development will be an asset to Oregon.
- All for the casino and all that goes with it.

### **Comments Noted**

### OPPOSITION

- Florence is a community of older people which depends on medical services in Eugene.
- We have no one to help us. The governor rides around in a \$400,000 bus with a casino logo on the side! Yet when he was attorney general he was opposed to casinos. Somebody needs to look out for the concerns of Florence and Oregon residents.

### **Comments Noted**

## CITY

- The continuation of Oak and Spruce Streets are also much needed.
- The crosswalks on 101 and 126 are very dangerous – especially in the dark. Tourists don't know to stop.
- Why doesn't ODOT use their engineering expertise and properly design the entire entry to Florence?
- A noise/sight barrier next to Coastal Highlands would benefit those residents.

**The City of Florence has jurisdiction for Oak and Spruce Streets. ODOT paid for the recent extension of Oak Street through a one time Local Street Network grant opportunity, because a well connected local street system (especially Oak and Spruce) helps take the pressure of local trips off of the highway. ODOT will continue to work with the City of Florence and Lane County to identify opportunities to continue the Oak St. and Spruce St. extensions.**

**Crosswalk location and design discussions are ongoing between the City of Florence and ODOT.**

**ODOT recently completed an upgrade to the OR 126/US 101 intersection in Florence. Further gateway treatments would need to be planned by the City of Florence and/or Lane County, and then forwarded for programming by one or both jurisdictions.**

## LEGAL QUESTIONS

- Will the 126 upgrade be completed or dropped when the lawsuit against the governor and the casino shows the casino to be an illegal activity?

**Should this situation occur, the Tribes would have to decide whether or not to pursue construction of the approach.**

**PACT Questions to Ask: "Got Questions: Ask ODOT"**

1. Who does our governor expect to pay for Hwy 126 improvements (between Florence and Eugene) to "accommodate" the increase in traffic from a casino?

**In Oregon, highway improvements are funded by road users, primarily with state and federal gas tax revenues.**

2. How much of the \$12.6 million cost for bridge improvement is due to the planned presence of a casino?

**None of the Bridge Replacement project is due to the gaming facility.**

3. How much of the \$12.6 million bridge improvement is this going to be paid by taxpayers, since the casino doesn't pay taxes?

**In Oregon, bridge replacement projects anticipated over the next ten years are largely funded through the 2003 Oregon Transportation Investment Act (OTIA III) recently approved by the state legislature.**

4. How much of the other improvements (turn lanes, road widening, stop lights, safety improvements, etc.) to Hwy. 126, North Fork Road, Munsel Lake Road and Coastal Highlands Drive does ODOT expect the casino to pay?

**ODOT is responsible for the state highway. Lane County is the responsible jurisdiction for North Fork Road and Munsel Lake Road, and the City of Florence is the responsible jurisdiction for Coastal Highlands Dr.**

**No improvements to OR 126 beyond those necessary for the access to OR 126W are proposed in conjunction with the opening day development proposal of the gaming facility. Impacts to the OR 126W corridor for potential future development phases have not yet been analyzed.**

**The State/Tribal Compact contains various provisions regarding tribal payment of transportation costs associated with the Gaming Facility.**

5. How much of future maintenance of all these improvements would the casino have to pay?

**ODOT pays for maintenance of the state highway system with state and federal gas tax revenue.**

6. Why are the plans allowing two primary access points for the casino, one on Hwy. 126 and one on North Fork Road?

**There are no plans for two primary accesses to the facility.**

7. If the casino will have two access points (Hwy. 126 and North Fork Road), why do they need an additional access point through the Coastal Highlands Neighborhood?

**The Tribes have indicated they are not proposing an access from Coastal Highlands Dr.**

8. We've been told that the Coastal Highlands Drive access is to be used just for emergency access. Two questions: (1) Why can't emergency vehicles access on either Hwy. 126 or North Fork Road; (2) Is the government required to ensure any other private land commercial development (inside or outside city limits) with THREE access points to public roads?

**See answer to # 7 above.**

9. If additional access is allowed on North Fork Road, how much will the casino pay for future maintenance of that road?

**Lane County is the responsible jurisdiction for North Fork Rd.**

10. If the additional access is allowed on North Fork Road, what steps are being taken to prevent Hwy. 101 traffic from taking a "shortcut" through Munsel Lake Road neighborhoods?

**There will be no signs directing traffic to Munsel Lake Road from US 101.**

11. How does ODOT intend to address the 33% increase in traffic expected on Munsel Lake Road by 2008?

**Lane County is the responsible jurisdiction for Munsel Lake Rd. Two thirds of the traffic increase projected in the TIA by 2008 for Munsel Lake Rd. is due to the normal increase in background traffic.**

12. ODOT Traffic Impact Study shows that allowing access directly to Hwy. 126 will still increase traffic at the North Fork Road intersection 7% to 8% because backup traffic from the Hwy. 126 entrance will extend to that intersection. Why is ODOT considering creating two traffic hazards instead of just one?

**The Traffic Impacts Analysis prepared by the developer's engineer, JRH Transportation Engineering, shows that the 7% to 8% increase in traffic *on North Fork Road* is the normally expected increase in background traffic (with or without the development) between 2003 and 2008.**

**Analysis shows that development trips will not block the North Fork/Hwy 126 intersection.**

13. Have the Lane County Traffic Plan and the Florence Traffic Plan been changed to reflect ODOT's plans to address the casino traffic?

**ODOT is not aware of any transportation system plan amendments that are proposed at this time.**

14. Is ODOT allowed to grant access permits to commercial activities which are ILLEGAL?

**ODOT does not enforce the legality of land uses.**