



Community & Neighborhood Forum Summary

Project: I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project

Subject: Community & Neighborhood Forum

Date: Thursday, September 28, 2017

Location: Billy Webb Elks Lodge (6 N Tillamook St, Portland, OR)

Overview

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Portland hosted a Community and Neighborhood Forum for the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project on Thursday evening, September 28th, 2017. The purpose of the event was to engage the local community about the project, provide them an overview of the project and encourage dialogue about the planned future improvements in the area. The event kicked off with introductions and an overview presentation from project team members followed by a question and answer period. The second half of the meeting was focused on small group table discussions. A project team member was staffed at each table where about five to seven people sat and shared thoughts about opportunities and concerns related to the project. At the end of the meeting, each table group reported out to the larger group things they discussed. This event also provided an opportunity for the public to comment on the purpose and need and range of alternatives, providing copies of the draft document and accepting verbal and written comments.

The event was publicized on a project mailer that was distributed to over 6,000 addresses surrounding the project area, a public news release and email distribution to 577 emails. ODOT also engaged in targeted outreach to the project area's historic African American and minority community, inviting over 20 organizations and faith-based groups that support or represent minority populations, including those who took part in the environmental justice interviews.

A total of 65 people signed in at the event. Sign language interpretation was provided for the hearing impaired.





Introduction

Shelli Romero, ODOT Community Affairs Manager, welcomed attendees and gave a brief introduction to the event. Chris Warner, Portland Bureau of Transportation Assistant Director, encouraged the group to offer feedback and information about the history of the area. Joan Brown-Kline introduced herself as the facilitator, shared ground rules for discussion, and asked the group to suggest additional ground rules.

Project Overview

Megan Channell, ODOT Project Manager and Andy Johnson, HDR Consultant Project Manager, provided a broad overview of the project. Johnson recounted the history of the project, and Channell described the status of the project today including its purpose and the six main improvements within the project. She went on to explain that the project is currently in the environmental study phase, which is part of the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process and required for projects with federal funding. Design is set to begin in 2019, with construction as early as 2023, depending on funding.

Open Question & Answer

Brown-Kline encouraged the group to ask questions and raise comments and suggestions to the project team. The team addressed questions about:

- **Project Improvements** – Bicycle and pedestrian improvements, the proposed replacement of Flint and seismic improvements.
 - New and updated bicycle and pedestrian improvements will be a part of this project. Specifics about their design will be informed by public input and the environmental review process.
 - One of the new highway covers will provide a new connection between Hancock and Dixon, replacing the current overpass at Flint Street.
 - The project will upgrade each of the overpasses in the project area to meet current seismic standards.
- **Cost & Funding** – Project funding and project cost, including the breakdown of costs for the local and highway improvements.
 - The project cost is \$450 million (2017 dollars).
 - Funding for the environmental study and preliminary design is in place. The majority of funding for the design and construction phases has been provided through House Bill 2017. ODOT will continue to work with its partners to seek additional funding for the final design and construction of the improvements.
 - The removal and replacement costs for the bridges over I-5 and for a new bicycle and pedestrian bridge at Clackamas make up approximately 50 percent of the biddable costs for the project.
- **Environmental Impacts** – Potential impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, noise and congestion.
 - The project team is currently studying short- and long-term impacts related to greenhouse gas emissions, air quality and noise levels in the project area. These



I-5 ROSE QUARTER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

findings will be published with the full environmental report in summer 2018. The public will have an opportunity to review and comment.

- The environmental study will also study current and future traffic conditions.
- **Vision Zero** – How the project supports the City of Portland’s Vision Zero.
 - This project aims to help the City of Portland move toward Vision Zero by improving the local street network for all modes of transportation. Improved bike and pedestrian facilities can protect users from injuries and fatalities. ODOT and the City are interested in hearing the public’s thoughts on ways to improve these safety facilities and effectively move towards the goal of Vision Zero.
- **Community Input** – How community input will be utilized in the planning and design processes.
 - The project team encourages community input throughout all stages of this project. All comments will be reviewed by the project team and considered for the purposes of the environmental assessment and design.
 - The team is specifically seeking suggestions for the bike and pedestrian improvements, how public space on the covers should be used, and how the project can further enhance community and connections.

Small Group Discussions

Brown-Kline directed attendees to form groups at the tables in the room, each with a staff facilitator. In groups, attendees were asked to share opportunities and concerns about the project, and any other thoughts they had. Facilitators recorded the group’s comments on flipcharts.

Report Back

After discussing in small groups, each group facilitator went around and reported the comments they heard to the entire group. In regards to opportunities, many groups discussed options for bike and pedestrian facilities, ways to incorporate local and minority businesses in the project, and opportunities for community art and improved landscaping in the area. In terms of concerns, some were concerned about changing traffic patterns, neighborhood air quality, access to the hospital, cost of the project, congestion pricing and the potential of induced demand on I-5. Others suggested more detailed drawings and models be made available to better understand the project. Many expressed a desire to see the findings of technical and environmental studies as they are made available.

Close

Channell thanked the group for attending and explained that the work is early in the project development process and the team will take the public feedback into account as the project moves forward. The project is currently studying the environmental impacts of building or not building the project, both positive and negative. The findings will be documented and shared with the public in summer 2018. She encouraged the group to stay engaged and to attend the Community Walk and Bike Ride the following weekend.