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Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project

Appendix A: Public Education and Acceptance Protocols and Criteria

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1. PROTOCOL FOR PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION

The Oregon Department of Transportation (“ODOT”) and the Oregon Transportation Improvement Group (“OTIG”) recognize that the success of the projects under consideration is ultimately tied to the willingness of the public to support the projects and use them as intended. This is, in turn, linked to our ability to effectively ascertain citizen and stakeholder needs, manage public expectations, provide opportunities for citizen and stakeholder input to the development process, and positively communicate the benefits of the projects to taxpayers, motorists and stakeholders. Assessing public attitudes and then developing a plan to address relevant issues is important to this initiative.

1.1 Goals

ODOT and OTIG support providing positive and proactive communications with citizens and obtaining a balanced representation of stakeholder and citizen views during the predevelopment phase. Both parties consider it a good practice to:

- 1) Provide a positive, straightforward presentation of information about the projects.
- 2) Seek out and consider the needs of stakeholders, motorists and citizens and use this input to improve the projects.
- 3) Actively identify stakeholder and public issues and concerns and provide timely responses and solutions to them.
- 4) Actively manage stakeholder and public expectations by anticipating statewide and localized concerns and by developing positive relations with the media.
- 5) Develop and implement an education plan for the state’s citizenry on modern tolling methods, the differences between various types of tolling, concessions, etc.

1.2 Approach

The emphasis placed on open communication and public involvement should help ensure that the projects meet the needs of Oregon taxpayers, communities and transportation system users. A well-informed, educated public that participates effectively in the development decision-making process should produce better transportation solutions for Oregon.

1.3 Expected Outcomes

It is expected that early communication and public involvement will result in the following:

- 1) Increased credibility for the projects and ODOT’s Innovative Partnership Program in general.
- 2) Greater public understanding and support for proposed transportation financing options.
- 3) Greater public understanding and support for the projects.
- 4) Project attributes that better reflect the interests and needs of key stakeholders.

1.4 Roles

- 1) ODOT will assign a senior communications staff member to guide the communications and outreach activities and serve as principal spokesperson for the projects and issues associated with the projects.
- 2) OTIG will assist designated ODOT staff and help coordinate the planning and implementation of a public communications, outreach, and participation plan.
- 3) ODOT and OTIG will work closely together to develop a positive, proactive approach to communication and provide opportunities for public participation.
To assist the process, a communications and outreach coordination committee will be established to review plans, materials and public statements concerning the project. Before issuing statements, press releases, or materials describing the projects, both parties will review and agree on appropriate form and language. The parties will also agree on the appropriate timing for the release of these materials.
- 4) ODOT will provide details on key stakeholders and previously collated information regarding attitudes and concerns related to the projects or tolling in general. ODOT will also provide details on previous public relations programs that have been considered successful as well as suggestions for the current program. OTIG will further assess stakeholder and public attitudes and develop a communications, outreach and participation plan to address the issues and concerns that are identified. The plan will be tailored to meet the needs of ODOT and OTIG and will be based on applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations; CS3 principles; and industry best practices. The plan will further define the role of ODOT and OTIG in the public outreach program during the predevelopment phase.

2. COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The following table describes in further detail a proposed two-way communication system for the Project in order to provide useful and timely information to the public as outlined in the Information, Education and Participation section of the Public Outreach Plan.

Communication System	
Information and Education	<p>Regularly meet with and solicit input from local officials on the best approach for educating and reaching out the general public. Provide an opportunity for key local officials to review draft communications materials and the draft public information plan.</p> <p>Prior to and immediately following any project milestone, meet with local officials to assist them in preparing for and responding to anticipated and unanticipated reactions from residents. Local officials should not be caught off-guard or surprised.</p> <p>Continue to develop and update easy-to-understand information materials including newsletters, fact sheets, a project e-newsletter, frequently asked questions (FAQ), and other hard-copy materials. Use a range of graphic and visual tools to enhance understanding. Expand the distribution of this material to reach a larger audience. Plan to disseminate materials at community events and other appropriate public gathering places.</p> <p>Create and maintain an enhanced project website that includes information such as substantive graphic presentation, an online survey at project milestones, a schedule, and a summary of what others in the community are saying about the project.</p> <p>Establish a speakers’ bureau to provide presentations to interested parties, as requested in both formal and informal settings. In addition, coordinate and staff selected briefings with media, large employers, business associations, and neighborhood organizations, wineries, Chambers of Commerce, and business associations for each locale. The briefings should be regular yet based on project milestones.</p> <p>At project milestones, update the press kit and meet and brief media contacts.</p> <p>Develop and maintain positive relationships with editors and reporters. For Newberg-Dundee, this means setting up meetings and maintaining regular contact with the Newberg Graphic, the McMinnville News-Register and local edition of The Oregonian,</p> <p>Create a short video that demonstrates how the tolling facility will function and how it will affect drivers.</p>
Public Participation	Establish a communications protocol with local elected officials to

	<p>regularly collect their input on communications materials prior to distribution to the public and solicit their comments as project milestones are approached.</p> <p>Coordinate with pre-scheduled meetings such as those organized by the NEPA project team and local organizations (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, civic organizations) to distribute information and solicit feedback from attendees. This will broaden participation and communicate that the OIPP/OTIG project team has a genuine interest in information-sharing and relationship-building.</p> <p>Develop a comment database to log and track comments, responses and maintain a central location for contact information. Periodic summaries of comments and responses can be integrated into internal reports and used to update and supplement the FAQ and other handouts.</p> <p>As part of the website, develop an online comment form and survey that can be used to solicit input from stakeholders.</p> <p>Develop a stand-alone comment and question sheet that can accompany other communications materials at public functions, and be available at locations where there is either an information booth or travelling display.</p> <p>Ensure that all communications materials contain an invitation to comment and provide appropriate contact information to make it easy for people to request information and submit comments.</p>
<p>Local Point of Contact</p>	<p>Establish a local point of contact who is available to the public, local officials, and others seeking more information or wishing to provide comments on the project. This person and office should be established in a central location within the project area, with the primary goals of providing information, receiving input and responding to questions, and building relationships. This contact could be responsible for coordinating local public participation efforts.</p>
<p>Integrate with NEPA/IAMPS Process</p>	<p>Continue to integrate public education and outreach efforts to support current planning processes (e.g., NEPA and IAMPS). The public generally views the Newberg-Dundee Bypass as one project and does not necessarily distinguish between the environmental and current feasibility assessments. It's important to help communicate the different roles of ODOT, OTIG, OIPP, and consultants, but also to ensure that interested parties are receiving timely and complete information about the project in general.</p>