
Chapter 7: Public and Agency Involvement

APPROACH

The NDTIP and Bypass used an open and ongoing public and agency involvement process. The process encouraged consideration and selection of the best alternative to solve current and future transportation needs, avoid and minimize impacts to the natural and built environments and enhance community livability. An integrated, interdepartmental (local, state and federal) planning and decision-making procedure completed the public process.

ODOT made broad public information and involvement project priorities, as evidenced by extensive media outreach, a project Web site, fact sheets, a video and well-attended public meetings and events in the communities of Newberg, Dundee and McMinnville.

SCOPING PERIOD OUTREACH AND SUMMARY RESULTS

Starting in November 2000, ODOT presented proposed solutions to the public for information and comment through a variety of forums. ODOT asked stakeholders and other members of the public for their opinions on the alternative corridors and other solutions that should be considered in the LDEIS. Through written questionnaires, attendance at public and neighborhood meetings, and block party events, more than 1,200 people participated in project scoping. Public and stakeholder input formed the basis for development of new alternatives and for a recommendation from the POST as to which alternatives should be analyzed in the LDEIS.

Major results of the scoping phase include:

- Developing alternatives that do not widen Oregon 99W in Dundee (responding to overwhelming public sentiment)
- Eliminating the Regional Bypass from further consideration (based on regulatory agency input)
- Re-inclusion and adjustment of a Northern Alternative (based on regulatory agency input)
- Dropping the Transportation Management Alternative as a stand-alone solution (from broad-based stakeholder input)
- Adjusting the southern corridors to minimize impacts to resources identified by the community (based on input from neighborhood meetings)
- Adding an alternative with no intermediate access points to avoid residential impacts

LDEIS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

ODOT released the LDEIS on October 1, 2002. The public comment period began the same day and was scheduled to end on November 15. However, due to public demand, ODOT and FHWA extended the period to December 16, 2002. In October 2002, four public hearings were held for the public to provide comment on the LDEIS either in writing or to a court reporter who transcribed the comments verbatim. The hearings were designed to allow commentors to provide oral testimony either in front of other participants and members of the POST or privately. All written materials were provided in English and Spanish. In addition, Spanish-language interpreters assisted Spanish-speaking attendees with obtaining information and providing comments. ODOT also conducted an additional public community meeting in Spanish to receive comments on the LDEIS from the Hispanic community.

Not only were the hearings advertised in the same manner as other public meetings and events, such as through media releases, fact sheets flyers, and the Web site, but they also were listed in the copies of the LDEIS. In total, 328 people attended these hearings; ODOT received 180 pieces of written

communications in the form of letters, email and project comment forms; and 96 people provided oral testimony at the public hearings.

ADVISORY AND OTHER COMMITTEES

The POST guided the project team and advised ODOT on selecting a Preferred Alternative. The POST provided recommendations to ODOT. ODOT then made a decision on whether or not recommendations were moved forward or implemented. Members of the POST included elected officials, directors and managers of the cities of Newberg, Dundee, Dayton and McMinnville and Yamhill County, ODOT, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), the FHWA, the Yamhill Parkway Committee and state legislators. POST members met seven times through the completion of the LDEIS and six times between the completion of the LDEIS and the completion of this LFEIS. Refer to the LDEIS, Chapter 7 for a list and description of public involvement activities associated with the development of the LDEIS.

A PAC made up of community stakeholders — citizen organizations, businesses, schools and other interest groups, as well as staff from affected city, county, state and federal agencies — provided input and guidance on the needs and interests of the area's communities. Members also were conduits from the project to the groups, jurisdictions and organizations they represent.

The Agency Advisory Committee (AAC) helped coordinate the regulatory aspect of the location selection process early in 2000. However, a new group, the CETAS, replaced the AAC. ODOT coordinated the work of CETAS to seek agreement on the project's Purpose and Need and evaluation criteria for selecting the best alternative. AAC/CETAS members participated in four "summit" meetings and conducted presentations at a community-wide meeting in Newberg. Committee members helped identify the range of alternatives evaluated in the LDEIS. They were also consulted during development of analytical methods. CETAS members were particularly helpful in identifying regulatory issues associated with the alternatives.

Additionally, a PMT, made up of representatives from ODOT and the consulting team, facilitated discussions between ODOT and DLCD concerning land use and transportation impacts. Project managers also regularly updated members of the Oregon Transportation Commission.

Summit Meetings

Members of the PAC and the POST held "summits" at four key junctures during the scoping period and alternatives analysis process. The summits were all-day work sessions, where these public, agency and jurisdictional partners helped formulate project goals and resolve critical issues concerning the project purpose and need, transportation performance thresholds, regulatory issues, evaluation criteria and measures, as well as review the alternative routes under consideration. Approximately 25 people attended each summit meeting. The following section provides a brief summary of each meeting.

November 29, 2000

Purpose: Reach an understanding of the project scope and schedule, identify common and distinct concerns and issues, discuss transportation goals and thresholds, and review evaluation criteria for selecting the project location alternative.

May 11, 2001

Purpose: Discuss agency regulations associated with the Bypass and the strengths and weaknesses of the alternatives under consideration. The concept of adding the Northern Alignment back in was also raised.

November 16, 2001

Purpose: Discuss the draft evaluation criteria and measures that will be used to evaluate the alternatives.

July 12, 2002

Purpose: Rank the evaluation criteria and measures that will be used to evaluate the alternatives.

POST Meetings

The following lists POST meetings held pertaining to development of the Location EIS.

January 11, 2001

Purpose: Develop alternatives and transportation performance thresholds.

April 27, 2001

Purpose: Discuss public involvement and facility needs based upon traffic modeling. Eliminate alternatives that failed to meet transportation performance thresholds.

June 29, 2001

Purpose: Refine the alternatives to carry forward into the study, based on public input and technical analyses.

August 24, 2001

Purpose: Further refine the alternatives, based on ODOT or resource protection regulations.

October 5, 2001

Purpose: Decide which alternatives to carry forward into the LDEIS.

October 26, 2001

Purpose: Review the selected alternatives, based on technical analyses.

December 7, 2001

Purpose: Discuss revisions to the draft evaluation criteria and measures recommended by participants at the November 16, 2001, Summit.

The following lists POST meetings conducted after completion of the LDEIS and the purpose of each meeting.

November 11, 2002

Purpose: Prepare for the January, 2003 meetings in which the POST was to recommend an alternative. Members reviewed project status, decision process and public hearing results.

January 10, 2003

Purpose: Prepare to recommend an alternative by reviewing land use action thresholds, a rating of qualitative evaluation measures and a summary of LDEIS comments.

January 22, 2003

Purpose: Recommend an alternative after reviewing responses to other alternatives, evaluation measure rankings, and the Project Management Team recommendation.

July 25, 2003

Purpose: Discuss interchange work sessions held in Newberg and Dundee, spring 2003, and present ODOT's position on the proposed interchange between Newberg and Dundee.

GOAL EXCEPTION

After release of the LDEIS, ODOT initiated the exception process to the Statewide Planning Goals and conducted the following activities related to Comprehensive Plan and Policy amendments and IGAs.

Representatives of local and state agencies participated in two workshops to discuss the four interchanges proposed in the Preferred Alternative. They provided input on policy direction to preserve the interchange functions for each interchange in terms of land use controls, access management, local street improvements and other issues.

Local jurisdictions held pre-application sessions to identify issues that could be addressed through the location level process or whether they needed to be addressed through adoption of policy, plan amendments, new ordinances and/or amendments, or other means. Participants also discussed additional information and documentation needed for the goal exception process.

Property owners in the Modified 3J corridor received a mailing explaining the Measure 56 Notice of Proposed Land Use Policies for the Preferred Alternative sent to them by the local jurisdictions. The Measure 56 Notice is required by Oregon law to advise property owners that their county or city government is considering land use policy changes by a specified project that may affect their property. The project team also established a toll-free hotline for the public to call with questions or comments about the Measure 56 Notice.

Yamhill County held public hearings and work sessions on the Goal Exceptions, and Newberg, Dundee and Dayton held public hearings on the Comprehensive Plan and Policy amendments throughout the summer of 2004. The jurisdictions provided public notification of the workshop and hearing schedules and related information about the process in the Measure 56 mailings and local newspapers. In addition, ODOT posted the schedules and Measure 56 information for each jurisdiction on the project web site.

ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT

Direct Mail, Fact Sheets, Web Site and Media Notification

The project team maintains a mailing list of interested parties throughout the process. In the fall of 2000, individuals and organizations on the project mailing list received a written notice asking if they wanted to continue to remain on the list. All parties or entities owning property within the Preferred Alternative corridor were added to this list. The current mailing list includes more than 1,790 individuals and organizations who have requested to be kept informed or have been added to the list.

ODOT distributed eight fact sheets and other project updates and meeting announcements to the mailing lists, and mailed an additional project update memo in summer 2001. This memo included an invitation to contact the project team if any organization was interested in holding a community meeting with the project team. As a result, 15 community and neighborhood meetings took place.

With assistance from Yamhill County, ODOT produced a project Web site providing information and an opportunity for people to submit questions and comments on the project. Contact information for the project team was available on the Web site and also printed on information materials. Information included descriptions and maps of the Bypass alternatives and answers to "Frequently Asked Questions," meeting announcements and descriptions of key phrases such as "Context Sensitive Solutions" and the "Goal Exception process." ODOT updated the materials as the project progressed and alternatives were modified. ODOT documented comments and questions from the public, which were responded to by the project team, as appropriate.

ODOT distributed 22 media releases to regional and local newspapers and radio stations announcing events and reporting on results of POST and public meetings and summits. Project team members also met with the editors and reporters of The Newberg Graphic, The Oregonian SW News Bureau, and the McMinnville News-Register to brief them on the project and answer questions.

The team established and maintained contact with the Newberg Area Chamber of Commerce, Chehalem Parks and Recreation District, Newberg School District, the Yamhill County Wineries Association, and the Yamhill County Hispanic Advisory Committee. ODOT asked these groups to help distribute meeting notifications and project updates to their constituencies. An additional mailing list consisted of community and business groups (including meeting and newsletter schedules) between the Oregon coast and the Portland metropolitan area.

Video, Public Meetings and Events

ODOT has provided project information to hundreds of citizens in the cities of Newberg and Dundee and nearby communities. ODOT held the first public event for the Bypass project at the Dundee Elementary School in April 2001. The purpose was to describe and receive public input on existing transportation conditions and the Build Alternatives. Approximately 370 people attended and reviewed display maps conversed with ODOT and project staff, and completed written questionnaires.

Due to the high demand for another opportunity for public comment on the Build Alternatives, ODOT held a second public event in Newberg in June 2001. Approximately 100 people attended this event, during which they listened to presentations from agency regulatory staff and met in small groups to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Build Alternatives under consideration. ODOT produced written reports from both events with synopses posted on the project Web site.

Between August and early October 2001, ODOT and the project team held meetings with property owners and neighborhood organizations along or near the Build Alternatives. The team also staffed booths in three community events sponsored by the Newberg Chamber of Commerce and the Dundee Community Center, including two block parties in Newberg and the Dundee Party in the Park. ODOT made available written materials and staff to answer questions. ODOT also distributed project information at block parties and community festivals throughout the spring and summers of 2002, 2003 and 2004.

In the spring of 2002, the project team produced a video explaining the project and the current set of Build Alternatives, and sent it to all POST and PAC members. It was also made available for loan, free of charge, at libraries, city halls, and some movie rental outlets in the project area. The video was also translated into Spanish and shown at area churches and other community events.

ODOT held two general community meetings in Dundee and Newberg in late May and early June 2002 to gather public input on the evaluation criteria and to show the project video. Subsequent to these meetings, the PAC reviewed the evaluation measures for the range of alternatives.

ODOT held four public hearings and one Spanish translation public meeting in the fall of 2002 during the LDEIS public comment period.

In the spring of 2003, ODOT held three community meetings to update people on the project, inform them of ODOT's right of way purchasing policies and next steps, describe plans for local TSPs and answer attendee questions. Two of the meetings were held in Newberg (one in English and one in Spanish) to focus on Newberg area issues. The third was held in Dundee and focused on Dundee and Dayton area issues.

In February 2004, the project team organized a speakers' bureau to discuss the preferred corridor, land use hearings and other activities with members of the POST and the ODOT project leader. ODOT sent an invitation to schedule presentations to representatives of community and business groups between the Oregon coast and the Portland metropolitan area.

Environmental Justice

The project team conducted special outreach in areas where environmental justice could be an issue. In particular, there are locations within the project study area with below-average-income populations and higher incidences of Hispanic or Spanish-speaking residents. The project's mailing list includes more than 40 Spanish-speaking residents who have requested to receive Spanish-language materials. They receive Spanish versions of all fact sheets and other information that is sent to the English-language mailing list.

In fall 2001, ODOT held three community meetings in southern Newberg at the recommendation of the City and the project team to discuss possible concerns about the project with residents. Efforts to inform residents about the study and the community meetings included more than 1,200 door hangers distributed in English and Spanish, Spanish-language flyers posted at area churches and other gathering places, and a mailing to property owners. Hispanic programming on radio station KLYC aired a Spanish-language public service announcement. ODOT also arranged for Spanish translation of fact sheets, information packets and the informational video, and provided translators and childcare providers at the public meetings.

In November, 2002, during the LDEIS public comment period, ODOT held a community meeting to brief Spanish-speaking residents on the project and to encourage review and comment on the LDEIS. The meeting was held immediately after a Sunday Spanish-language congregation at Friends Church in Newberg.

The project team used a number of methods to advertise the meeting and encourage participation from members of the local Spanish-speaking community. A Spanish-language flyer went home with area schoolchildren to advertise the meeting and its purpose. Additionally, the local pastor announced the meeting at church and distributed copies of the flyer. An interpreter canvassed potentially affected neighborhoods in southeast Newberg and distributed the most recent project fact sheet, the Executive Summary of the LDEIS, the project video, both in Spanish and English, and a flyer in Spanish promoting the meeting.

To further advertise the meeting, ODOT sent a copy of the flyer to radio station KLYC and to *El Hispanic News* for inclusion in its community calendar section. Flyers and copies of the fact sheet in Spanish also were posted in businesses frequented by members of the Hispanic community.

Coordination with Dundee TSP

In a separate but complementary process, the City of Dundee developed a TSP. The Dundee citizen advisory committee (DTAC) has met 15 times since November 2000 to discuss the city's TSP and the alternatives under consideration for the Bypass. This project has proceeded on a track parallel to the Bypass to increase the likelihood of integrating community needs. In three community meetings held for the TSP, participants also were given opportunities to discuss and comment on the Bypass. The Dundee TSP also called for development of a more specific plan for Oregon 99W as a Main Street after the construction of a bypass when traffic volumes and the classification of the roadway are reduced. This work took place in 2004 and 2005. It affirmed that the City continues to want Oregon 99W to have a 3-lane cross-section after the bypass in order to create a better pedestrian environment and support the City vision and intention to create a compact, traditional downtown. As of May 2005, this plan is beginning the local adoption process which is expected to be complete by August 2005.