

# CHAPTER 5. Project Coordination and Public Involvement

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*ODOT has conducted a variety of public outreach activities to gather the community's interest and concerns about the Highway 199 Expressway Upgrade project. This chapter summarizes the public outreach and agency consultation that has occurred over the course of the project.*

## 5.1 Project Coordination

ODOT has coordinated with a variety of stakeholders internally and externally. Internal coordination has occurred across disciplines and with ODOT's managers and decision makers. External coordination has occurred at both the local and regional level and is described below.

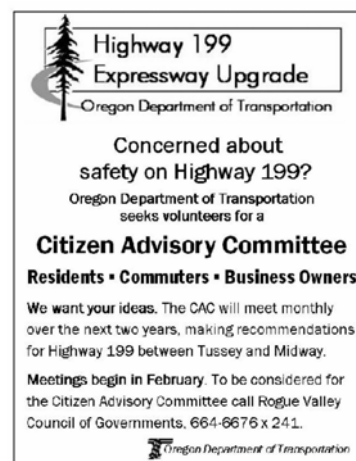
### 5.1.1 Local Coordination

Local coordination has occurred throughout the project and involved the following entities:

- Citizen Advisory Committee
- Project Development Team
- Josephine County
- City of Grants Pass

#### *Citizens Advisory Committee*

A Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was assembled to ensure that the project considered the community's interests, issues, knowledge, and recommendations. The CAC consisted of residents, commuters, business owners, property owners, and special interest groups.



Print advertisement to solicit members for the Citizen Advisory Committee.

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#### **The CAC's specific responsibilities included:**

- Assisting in identifying project and community issues
  - Discussing project activities with constituencies and neighbors and reporting back to the CAC
  - Discussing and evaluating potential solutions
  - Making recommendations to the PDT
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February 2005 CAC meeting.

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**The PDT's specific responsibilities included:**

- Developing the purpose and need statement
- Developing and screening alternatives
- Deciding which alternatives to study in detail in the EA
- Deciding which alternatives to withdraw from further study
- Determining the preferred alternative

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**ODOT has coordinated with the following state and federal agencies throughout the project:**

- **State of Oregon:** Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL), Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD).
- **Federal Agencies:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The CAC met 13 times between February 2005 and October 2006; two of those meetings were joint meetings with the Project Development Team (PDT). All meetings were held at the Rogue Community College, except one of the two joint meetings which was held at the Josephine County Fairgrounds. The CAC's role after the EA is released for public comment will be to make a recommendation on the preferred alternative.

*Project Development Team*

The PDT was assembled to represent the interests of the public and make project decisions. The PDT voting members consisted of staff from the City of Grants Pass, Josephine County, Grants Pass Chamber of Commerce, Oregon State Police, the freight/trucking industry, ODOT, and a citizen-at-large. Non-voting members represented Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the CAC, and other ODOT technical specialists.

When making project decisions, the PDT considered input from the CAC, ODOT, and the public through the public involvement process. The PDT also met 13 times between February 2005 and October 2006; two of those meetings were joint meetings with the CAC. The PDT's role after the EA is released for public comment will be to make a decision on the preferred alternative.

*City, County, and Other Coordination*

ODOT also coordinated with the City of Grants Pass and Josephine County through their representatives on the PDT. Additionally, as specific issues arose, ODOT coordinated with individuals from these agencies on a one-on-one basis. ODOT also coordinated with the Josephine County Fair Board, private property owners, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), businesses, and Oregon state representatives to answer general questions and to discuss access and right of way acquisition. General information about the project and conceptual landscape treatments proposed for Highway 199 between Tussey Lane and Allen Creek Road were presented to the Grants Pass Chamber of Commerce on September 29, 2006. This information was also presented to the Grants Pass City Council on October 2, 2006.

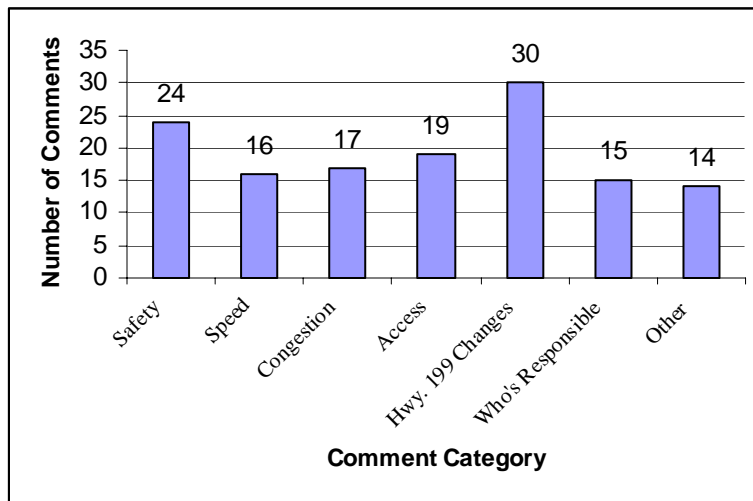
## 5.1.2 Coordination with Other Federal and State Agencies

ODOT has also coordinated with other state and federal agencies throughout the project to discuss potential project effects and mitigation. ODOT's liaisons at federal and state resource agencies were informed of the project, although coordination with these entities was minimal because effects to natural resources were minimal. ODOT will continue to coordinate with these state and federal agencies as needed throughout the project. A list of agencies who received a copy of this environmental assessment for review is provided in Appendix F.

## 5.2 Public Involvement

Initial public comments were collected from early stakeholder surveys in December 2004 through March 2005. The comments ranged from concern over bicycle and pedestrian safety along Highway 199 to how changes to Highway 199 would affect businesses. The comments received from these surveys and as well as written comments filed at the first two CAC meetings are summarized in Exhibit 5-1.

EXHIBIT 5-1. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED



Additional project outreach included three open houses. The project's first open house was held on March 3, 2005, and the purpose was to conduct the scoping for the project's EA. At this open house 71 people signed the attendance sheet. The open house was conducted as a self-guided tour of the project, with project staff

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### Highway 199 Public Involvement Activities

- Newspaper articles and advertisements, radio and television information broadcasts, and project website
  - Public surveys: December 2004 through March 2005
  - CAC meetings: 13 meetings between February 2005 and October 2006
  - Open House 1: March 3, 2005
  - Open House 2: August 25, 2005
  - Open House 3: January 2007
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### Scoping Meeting – March 3, 2005

#### A scoping meeting is designed to:

- Inform the public and agencies of the project and alternatives
  - Serve as a forum to gather comments to help identify potential environmental effects
  - Ensure that the environmental documents consider reasonable alternatives
  - Help identify issues and concerns to focus on items important to the local agencies and community.
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stationed at displays to discuss the project and answer questions. Eighteen written comments were received at this open house, primarily dealing with changes to Highway 199, speed, and safety.



August 2005 Open House

The second open house was held on August 25, 2005. At this open house, 61 people signed the attendance sheet. The purpose of this open house was to discuss the conceptual alternatives developed by the PDT and CAC, including the NEPA process used to formulate these alternatives, and to present the alternatives recommended for detailed study in the EA. ODOT staff was available to answer questions and to gather input from local residents and businesses.

The third open house is scheduled for January 2007. There will be two elements of this meeting: 1) Stations will be posted throughout the meeting room to update attendees on the project's status and to discuss how public and environmental issues are being considered and addressed; and 2) There will also be a more structured public hearing component to this meeting where the public can give formal testimony.

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**Highway 199 Expressway Upgrade Website**

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION3/>

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News articles and ads about the project appeared in the *Grants Pass Daily Courier* and the free weekly circulation *Sneak Preview*. ODOT staff arranged to have information broadcast on local radio (KAJO) and on the public access cable television system (RVTV). ODOT has also maintained a publicly accessible project website. The internet address for the project website was provided in a letter that ODOT distributed in December 2005 to 470 stakeholders in the eastern end of the project. This letter also encouraged people to contact ODOT staff to learn more about the project.