

I-5 @ Aurora Donald Interchange, Phase 1

Public Involvement and Communications Plan

DRAFT

Drafted by JLA Public Involvement, January 2019

ODOT is currently planning improvements to the Aurora-Donald Interchange on Interstate 5 (Exit 278) to increase safety and reduce traffic issues for vehicles entering and exiting the freeway in this area. Planning and design are scheduled to last through 2021 with construction expected shortly after that. This communications plan lays out the strategies for engaging and communicating with project stakeholders in both the design and construction phases of the project.

Project Overview

The Aurora-Donald Interchange on Interstate 5 (Exit 278) is in need of major improvements. Originally built to serve a sparse, rural population, the interchange has become an important crossroads for the growing communities throughout north Marion County. Increasing traffic along Ehlen Road has made it difficult for vehicles to exit I-5, causing long backups, especially during evening commute hours. The current road design, with restricted sight lines and challenging intersections (particularly with Bents Road) also causes safety issues and increases the risk of collision in this area.

This project aims to improve safety and traffic flow by designing and constructing infrastructure improvements to both the on- and off-ramps as well as the adjacent roads. These improvements will be developed in conjunction with an Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP), which will analyze how improvements can serve both the immediate and long-term needs of the area. A total of \$28.3 million has been allocated for the first phase of improvements. These funds are mostly from the HB2017 transportation funding package. The IAMP will likely include additional improvement recommendations that will be part of a second phase, once funding is secured.



Purpose and Goals of the PI/Communications Plan

The purpose of the public involvement program is to build awareness and understanding about the project, gather input about specific design elements, and prepare the public for Phase 1 construction.

The public involvement goals are to:

- Communicate complete, accurate, understandable and timely information to the public throughout the project.
- Help the public understand the IAMP and its role in the interchange improvement project.
- Actively engage all affected and interested stakeholders about the current challenges of the intersection and gather input on design alternatives for improving it.
- Prepare the public for the impact of construction and work toward mitigation of construction impacts, such as access issues, time of year, etc.

Target Audiences & Key Stakeholders

The communication efforts seek to inform impacted and interested individuals, businesses, jurisdictions and organizations. The PI process will seek to inform and engage the following types of affected and interested people and organizations in the project area:

- Adjacent truck stops (Flying J & Travel Center of America)
- Aurora Acres RV Park
- Nearby businesses, residents, and property owners
- Marion County Officials
- City of Aurora Officials
- City of Donald Officials
- Aurora State Airport
- Champeog State Park
- Freight Interests
- Agricultural interests
- Bike and pedestrian interests
- Environmental interests
- Accessibility groups
- Emergency service providers
- Local media outlets
- Traditionally underserved communities (may be an opportunity to engage area employees)

Key Messages

Key messages summarize the why, what, and how of the process, and constitute basic talking points the project team will use when communicating with target audiences about the project. The key messages will change and expand as the project evolves.

- This project is designed to improve safety and traffic for both freight and passenger vehicles using the Donald Aurora interchange (Exit 278).
- The project aims to minimize impacts to adjacent properties and businesses. Improvements will be done within the existing footprint of the interchange as much as possible.
- As part of the project, an Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP) will be developed to protect public investments and ensure the long-term functionality of the interchange.
- With increased traffic over the years, the intersection of Bents Road and Ehlen Road has become particularly dangerous. This project will look at options for reorienting this intersection to improve safety and functionality.
- \$28.3 million has been allocated to this project, primarily from the HB2017 transportation funding package. This amount is expected to fund initial priority improvements with further

recommended improvements built during a second phase when additional funding becomes available.

Communications and Outreach Tools

Appropriate participation tools are critical to building awareness and transparency of potential impacts and mitigation measures throughout the design process. The following table includes informational tools and activities that will be used throughout the project to inform a broader public audience.

Tool/Activity ¹	Description	Lead	Timing
Stakeholder database	A database will be created which includes potentially impacted and interested parties in the project area. The database will be updated as the project progresses and will track those individuals and groups who express interest in the project. The database will be used for notification meetings, setting up local briefings, and communicating key milestones, traffic impacts and closures.	JLA	Jan 2018
Project Vicinity Maps and Updates	A series of project vicinity maps will be created to show the project site and regional context. The map will highlight the interchange and potential change areas as well as the broader IAMP area.	JLA	Jan 2018
Project Website	A project webpage, hosted on the ODOT website, will be used as the main repository of project information. Basic project information and documents will be hosted on this website. Important updates about SAC meetings, public workshops, and construction information will be displayed prominently on the website.	JLA content; ODOT posting	Continuous
Stakeholder Interviews	The project team will proactively contact the properties and businesses immediately adjacent to the interchange to set up in-person meetings to share information about process and gather concerns. These stakeholders include: Travel Center of America, Flying J Travel Center, Aurora Acres RV, and local farmers (TBD). Additional stakeholder interviews will be with local jurisdictions, ag and freight representative, and others to be identified. Some stakeholders will also then serve on SWG.	JLA/Parametrix /ODOT Ness may also attend	January/February 2019, and as needed
Notification Mailers	Four (4) mailers will be developed to send to all businesses and residential addresses within 1 mile of the project area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mailer 1: Announcement of the project, with contact and web information - Mailer 2: Announcement of first open house - Mailer 3: Announcement of second open house - Mailer 4: Announcement of final design and construction schedule 	JLA design; TBD mailing	Mailer 1 - January 2019 Mailer 2 – April 2019 Mailer 3 – October 2019 Mailer 4 - TBD
Press releases	Four press releases will be developed to inform local news media about the project. Press releases will have similar content to the mailers and will go out around the same time.	JLA content; ODOT distribution	Same as Mailer schedule

Tool/Activity ¹	Description	Lead	Timing
Additional print/public info coordination	Prepare information for City newsletters and freight related publications.	JLA/ODOT	February and as possible pending publications
Jurisdiction Briefings	Marion County and the Cities of Donald and Aurora will receive council/commission briefings on the project.	JLA to schedule, JLA/ODOT/DEA meetings	Feb 2019 and at key milestones
SWG Meetings	<p>Four meetings of the Stakeholder Working Group will provide the opportunity to discuss and offer guidance on the project. This team will include both a technical team and key interest groups. The team will discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IAMP goals and objectives - Design alternatives - Recommended design 	JLA manage logistics and facilitation	<p>Formation: January/Feb 2019</p> <p>Meeting 1: Feb 2019</p> <p>Meeting 2: April 2019</p> <p>Meeting 3: October 2019</p> <p>Meeting 4: TBD</p>
Public Workshops (in person and online open house/event)	<p>Two public workshops will keep the public informed about the project and solicit input when needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop 1: Provide basic information about the project and gather feedback on preferences of three design alternatives for the interchange - Workshop 2: gather feedback and input on a final recommended design and provide information on project next steps including construction timeline and impacts. 	JLA logistics DEA/JLA – display boards JLA/DEA/ODOT – staffing	<p>Workshop 1 – May 2019</p> <p>Workshop 2 – November 2019</p>
Truck Stop Engagement	<p>Tabling will be done at the two truck stops next to the interchange to solicit feedback from the freight community about alternatives for the interchange design. A short survey will be used to gather input. The tabling will be done at peak times (TBD).</p> <p>Additionally, informational flyers and fact sheets will be left at truck stops to inform the freight community about the project and about the construction timeline and impacts.</p>	JLA	<p>Tabling – May 2019</p> <p>Information – continuous</p>
Stakeholder emails	Emails will be sent to all stakeholders about project information and updates including public workshops, SWG meetings, and design decisions.	JLA	In conjunction with other activities

Project Team Roles and Responsibilities

JLA Public Involvement

- **Kristen Kibler, Public Involvement Manager.** Kristen will oversee all public involvement activities. She will lead the logistics of developing all public information and activities. She will manage the review process of public information.
- **JLA staff.** Implementation of public involvement and communications program.

ODOT

- **Bill Ness, Project Leader.** Will provide input and review of public information. Will be a part of the SWG meetings and the public workshops.
- **Lou Torres, Community Affairs.** Lou will provide input and review of public information. Lou will perform logistical tasks for web updates and press release distribution.
- **Michelle Becker.**

DEA

- **Shelly Alexander, Interchange Design Project Manager.** Shelly oversees the design process of the interchange. Shelly will provide input on involvement strategy and activities. Shelly will be an active part of the SWG meetings and the public workshops. Shelly will provide and review all public information.

Parametrix

- **Bill Ciz, IAMP Project Manager.** Bill oversees the development of the IAMP. Bill will provide input on involvement strategy and activities. Bill will be an active part of the SWG meetings and the public workshops. Bill will provide and review all public information related to the IAMP.

Stakeholder Working Group Members

TBD

Measuring and Monitoring Outreach Activities

At key milestones, the PI team will meet to discuss and assess how well the program is meeting the public involvement goals listed in this plan. While evaluation of these goals is necessarily subjective, the team will also consider the following more measurable objectives as the team assesses program effectiveness:

- Number of participants attending meetings or events.
- Number of website hits or downloads occurring during a specific time period.
- Number of people who have signed up for the project mailing list.
- Number of project comments received (phone, email, online).
- Whether the comments are relevant to the project (indicates project understanding).
- How project decisions have been modified as a result of public input.
- Voice and tone of any media stories about the project.