

WMIS BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

Date: Wednesday, November 16, 2022

Time: 2:00 – 3:45 pm

Location: Zoom webinar

Business Community Attendees:

Ron Arp, Identity Clark County, President

Melissa Blackburne, Sparkling Perfection, CEO

Alicia Bermes, Beaverton Area Chamber of Commerce, CEO/President

Lauren Bishop, Beaverton Valley Times, Reporter

Jennifer Fetterley, American Medical Response, Operations Manager

Annie Herbert, Kaiser Permanente, GR Manager

Tim Layton, Genentech Inc, Director, State Government Affairs

Zachary Lindahl, Washington County Chamber of Commerce, Director of Public Policy and Government Relations

Jeff Pazdalski, Westside Transportation Alliance

Keith Peal, Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Carly Riter, Intel Corporation

Brad Smith, Windsor Properties, Ltd., General Manager

James Winslow, Otak

Agency Representatives:

Brendan Finn, ODOT

Kate Hawkins, Metro

Stephanie Millar, ODOT

Malu Wilkinson, Metro

Tim Collins, Metro

Molly Cooney-Mesker, Metro

Project Management Group Attendees:

Chris Deffebach, Washington County

Eric Hesse, City of Portland

Don Odermott, City of Hillsboro

Gregg Snyder, City of Hillsboro

Staff and Consultants:

Nadine Appenbrink, Parametrix

Brandy Steffen, JLA Public Involvement

Mara Krinke, Parametrix

Jake Warr, Espousal Strategies

MEETING SUMMARY

This business roundtable for the Westside Multimodal Improvement Study connected businesses in the project area with the technical team to better understand their transportation concerns and needs for the future.

Welcome

Facilitator, Brandy Steffen, JLA Public Involvement, welcomed the participants and reviewed Zoom tools and etiquette.

Brendan Finn, ODOT Urban Mobility Office Director, opened the meeting and made introductory remarks about the context of the study. He thanked the participants for their involvement before introducing the Urban Mobility Office, overviewing its origin, areas of focus, and the office's partnership with stakeholders.

Mr. Finn outlined the background of the study, noting the need to focus on the Westside Corridor and the strong support from business leaders that prompted its start. He thanked Metro for partnering on this study and emphasized that collaboration with the business community is essential to achieve a successful outcome.

Ms. Steffen introduced herself and shared the data from the registration questions, including the number of respondents who self-identified their number of employees and answered, "What do you like about the doing business in the west side?" The general themes of responses include:

- Good area with access to major routes and proximity to other businesses
- Great residential areas and strong business presence
- Leaders work together and take a proactive approach to issues
- Long family/personal history in the area

Ms. Steffen launched the first poll. The poll question and results are listed below:

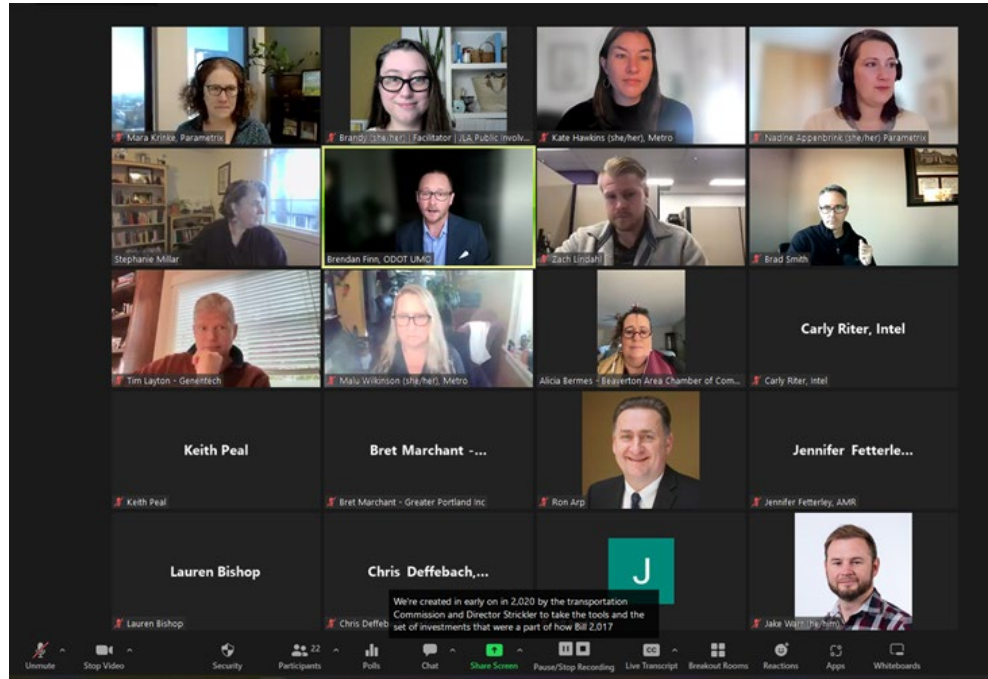
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOUR BUSINESS?

- Freight: 42% (5/12)
- Commuter Needs: 33% (4/12)
- Delivery/Service: 17% (2/12)
- Other: 8% (1/12)

Ms. Steffen explained that identifying participant priorities will help with the breakout group assignments.

Needs, Issues and Problems

Kate Hawkins, Metro, provided an overview of the study area and the project goals, noting that the study is focused on the Sunset Highway Corridor. The study goals (mobility and reliability, safety, social equity, climate action, economic vitality) were collaboratively developed with the Project Management Group and Steering Committee.



Ms. Hawkins shared the problem statement, highlighting that the growth of Washington County is a major factor, along with traffic congestion and low transit ridership. She noted the overall goal and objective of this study: to sustain the area's economic health and quality of life by thinking about the mobility of both people and goods through the corridor.

Ms. Hawkins shared how past efforts inform the work today, including the Portland Region Westside Freight Access and the Washington County Futures Study. In addition to informing the Westside Multimodal Improvement Study, input from the business community will also help inform the update to the Regional Transportation Plan update, which is currently underway. Ms. Hawkins wrapped up her presentation by highlighting the key issues and needs identified within the study area Issues and Needs, which build on findings from previous planning efforts and were refined by the Project Management Group and the Steering Committee.

Issues:

- Transit travel times are not competitive
- Inadequate "last mile" access
- Congestion due to limited capacity
- Traffic safety for all users and modes
- Impaired freight movement

Needs:

- Improve multimodal options
- Increase transportation equity
- Reduce congestion and improve safety
- Improve freight mobility
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Breakout Group #1

Ms. Steffen launched the second poll. The poll question and results are listed below (answers in bold received the most responses):

HOW IMPORTANT IS FREIGHT MOVEMENT TO YOUR BUSINESS? (FROM 1 - 5)

- 1: Not at all important: (0/13)
- 2: (Not very important): 8% (1/13)
- 3: Neutral: **38% (5/13)**
- 4: (Important) 15% (2/13)
- 5: Very important: **38% (5/13)**

She then launched the third poll. The poll question and results are listed below:

HOW IMPORTANT ARE EMPLOYEE COMMUTE ISSUES TO YOUR BUSINESS?

- 1: Not at all important: (0/13)
- 2: (Not very important): (0/13)
- 3: Neutral: 23% (3/13)
- 4: (Important): 8% (1/13)
- 5: Very important: **69% (9/13)**

Ms. Steffen reviewed the results and explained the meeting plan before launching the three breakout rooms. Ms. Steffen invited the facilitators to report back on their discussions.

- **Mara Krinke, Parametrix**, introduced herself and her breakout group, which focused on freight. The group shared concerns around travel time and reliability for freight movements as some participants have time-sensitive and high-value products, notably Genentech. They also discussed the intersectionality between freight and commuters, as many producers also have many employees, and noted the need for more multimodal options and continued transit improvements.
 - **Tim Collins, Metro**, added that the lack of redundancy on the Westside and the lack of routes are an issue for freight mobility and noted the time-sensitive nature of some of the producers around that corridor.
- **Nadine Appenbrink, Parametrix**, introduced herself and her group, which focused on delivery and service businesses. They discussed the impact congestion has on delivery/service businesses

and the uniqueness of their operations, stating that employees often have to make multiple trips per day to fulfill different work orders. Ms. Appenbrink also explained that businesses are reliant on packages or larger shipments to be delivered on time to complete their jobs. The group felt that traffic congestion has returned to its pre-pandemic state. Participants were interested in learning more about regional tolling studies, particularly the effects of tolling on delivery services, which could be subject to tolls multiple times a day based on travel patterns.

- A member also shared their observation of emergency vehicle response time and the delay caused by increased traffic volumes.
- **Zach Lindahl, Washington County Chamber of Commerce**, spotlighted the small businesses in the area.
- Ms. Hawkins concluded that the discussion highlighted the unique needs of service and delivery businesses.
- **Jake Warr, Espousal**, introduced himself and his group, which focused on commuter needs. The group discussed the need for travel time reliability, and personal and physical safety while biking, walking or taking transit to make multimodal options more convenient and attractive. He noted that a main theme of the discussion was surrounding first and last "mile" issues. The group shared examples of successful employer-led programs or strategies addressing first and last "mile" issues, noting the employee's willingness is a major key. Another issue of note was how unreliable travel times for patients can have a detrimental impact on healthcare services and providers with ripple effects in scheduling appointments.
 - **Stephanie Millar, ODOT**, added that the group discussed carpooling and that dedicated HOV lanes could encourage more carpooling, but that the group noted how hybrid work schedules and shift times complicated ride sharing.

Ms. Steffen opened the floor up for participants' comments and questions.

- **Zach Lindahl, Washington County Chamber of Commerce**, suggested that involving TriMet in the conversation could be helpful. He noted that commute and commuter safety is a major part of the conversation, which overlaps heavily with ongoing TriMet campaigns.
 - Ms. Hawkins explained that TriMet is a part of the Project Management Team and on the Steering Committee, noting that they will share materials and feedback from this meeting with the Project Management Team and the Steering Committee.
- **Chris Deffebach, Washington County**, made a comment in the chat about the challenges service and delivery vehicles face with high-occupant vehicle lanes, as they usually drive alone.
- **Ron Arp, Identity Clark County**, emphasized the need to fix the I-5 corridor as it slows everything down, including the Sunset Corridor.
- **Don Odermott, Hillsboro**, highlighted a comment made by **Carly Rider, Intel**. The Vista Ridge tunnel is not hazmat rated and navigating Cornelius Pass Road is difficult and creates challenges.
 - Ms. Rider added that the issue is surrounding the lack of redundant routes and delays in getting around the tunnel when carrying hazardous materials.
- **Brad Smith, Windsor Properties**, shared that the majority of traffic on Cornelius Pass Road consists of commuters and trucks. Despite the improvements, it is not a good route for trucks and can be challenging for commuters to drive along with freight vehicles. He emphasized the

need to focus on that corridor as it is an essential route that is not up to standard with current traffic volumes albeit being the only direct north-south route from Washington County.

Ms. Steffen invited the participants to continue sharing comments or questions in the chat before inviting Ms. Appenbrink and Ms. Millar to talk about Existing Conditions.

Existing Conditions Data

Ms. Appenbrink began the presentation and explained that they will be providing a high-level summary of the existing conditions data. She overviewed the data surrounding freight and regional exports, focusing on high-tech manufacturing, noting that the region and industry are major economic drivers for the state. She then reviewed the travel patterns of the corridor, explaining that the data was collected through mobile phone data of travelers in and out of the region. She then provided an overview of the freight patterns, stating that Sunset Highway is a major freight corridor despite trucks only making up 5.3% of the total vehicle volumes. She explained that while there is congestion, the low percentage of trucks shows that freight traffic is not the main cause of congestion. Reviewing the safety data, she emphasized the goal of Improving safety for all users.

Ms. Millar shared more about the commute patterns observed in the study area, mentioning that it is a major employment destination and most of the traffic consists of commuters traveling in or out of the area for work. She reviewed the data surrounding carpooling and vanpooling, and then reviewed changes in transit usage during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Millar reviewed the data collected through ODOT's Get There Oregon Human Resources Survey, noting that commute issues have grown in importance to Oregon employers in light of the labor shortage and high gas prices. She shared study results on the impacts of long commutes, and how bad commutes hurt both employees and employers, explaining that studies have shown many employees would quite a job to avoid a bad commute. She then shared the programs and resources that the employers are interested in and emphasized that the programs are available through the Westside Transportation Alliance.

Ms. Steffen invited the group to ask questions or add comments.

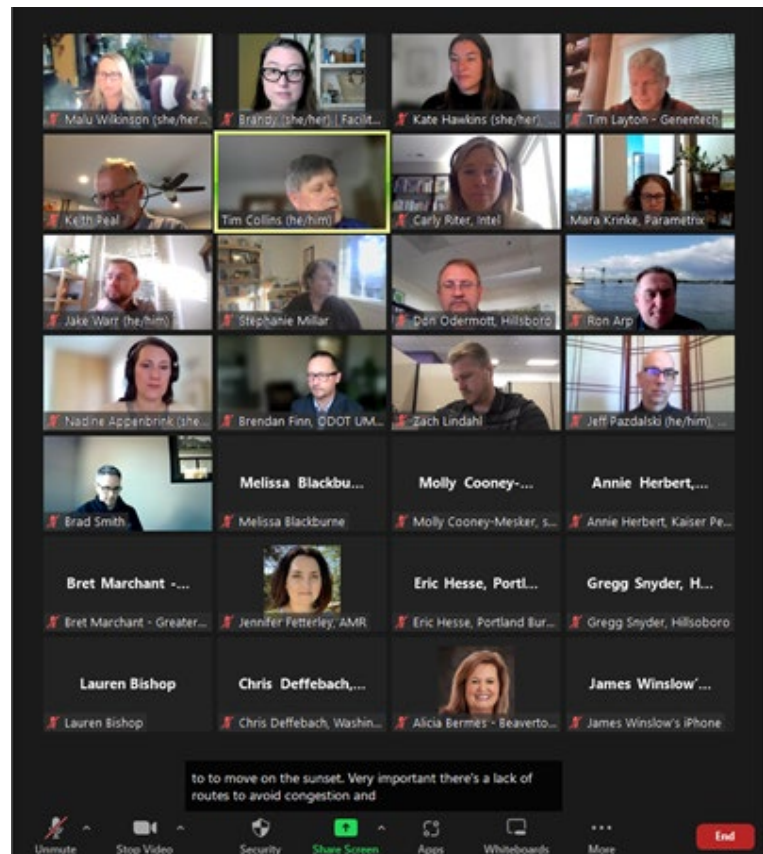
- **Annie Herber, Kaiser Permanente**, asked about the safety data and if the team has explored solutions that could be implemented on the Westside to decrease the number of crashes.
 - Ms. Appenbrink answered that there is data surrounding different interventions collected in the industry and the team will be using those to help inform their approach.
- **Mr. Smith** asked if there was data or studies surrounding traffic diversion off highways and if that had resulted in higher accidents.
 - Ms. Appenbrink answered that using the team's past modeling and data collected using mobile phones provide the team an insight into the diverted trips. She explained that it is one of the project team's goals to reduce the number of diverted trips to make transportation better, but they do not have data showing the correlation between diverted traffic and crashes. She shared that Metro's newly completed study on high-injury corridors listed the high-injury corridors within the study area and emphasized

that while the team doesn't have the information surrounding the link between diverted traffic and crashes, they're looking into diverted traffic data and crash data.

Breakout Group #2

Ms. Steffen shared the discussion questions in the chat and reviewed the meeting plan before launching the breakout groups. The discussion questions were:

- Is your staffing/workforce impacted by traffic congestion? How?
- Does your staff use transit – If so/not how? Also, where would your staff benefit the most from transit connections that are faster, more convenient, and reliable?
- Does congestion impact local delivery and services? How?
- Do transportation impacts affect your ability to operate or expand your business? How?
- Does congestion impact your interstate and international shipping? How?



Ms. Steffen invited the facilitators to report back on their discussions.

- Mr. Warr reported that his group discussed the lack of good north-south connectivity, its impact on travel from southern areas, and the impact of transportation barriers and lack of options on employee hiring and retention. The group agreed on the overarching impact of congestion on all modes of transportation. The group also discussed successful employer-sponsored carpooling/vanpooling programs that could be helpful in the bigger picture.
 - Ms. Millar added that hybrid work schedules impact people's travel patterns and preferred modes.
- Ms. Appenbrink highlighted that the group's businesses are located in the Hillsboro area. She shared that the group discussed the impact congestion and commutes have on employee retention and hiring. Her group also touched on the personal safety aspect of transit ridership and how personal safety concerns have discouraged some employees from using transit. They also discussed the impact of congestion on local delivery and services and how it limits them in their expansion plans to other locations across the region. Ms. Appenbrink highlighted that

while interstate and international shipping was not a major concern for her group, there are many businesses in the region to whom this may be of interest.

- Mr. Smith added that their company allows flexible schedules, and some employees start work early to avoid congestion in certain areas but people have varying schedules.
- Ms. Krinke shared that their group included both major production employers such as Intel and Genentech and representatives from construction work and cleaning services. They agreed that corridor mobility is important, especially for businesses considering expansion. Her group focused on commuter movements and reflected on existing conditions data. One of the business representatives noted that due to the location of employees and long commutes to the business location, they are considering expanding their service into the area where employees reside. The group discussed the challenges with transit for Intel employees, noting that many people's commute time increased when more stops are added along the route, illustrating the balance of express bus service versus more coverage. Last-mile shuttle services would be beneficial in supporting commute via transit. The group also discussed the Employee Commute Options Survey that was conducted at larger businesses. Ms. Krinke identified the survey implementation as an opportunity to partner with businesses to better understand the employees' needs. Her group also discussed shift work, flexibility surrounding shift work, and potential ways for shift workers in manufacturing to avoid rush hour traffic. The group also reflected on the shifts in transportation and traffic patterns due to the pandemic and discussed increased transportation needs that will arise out of the population boom. She noted that the breakout group felt it is critical to explore redundant routes and surface capacity.

There were no additional questions or comments.

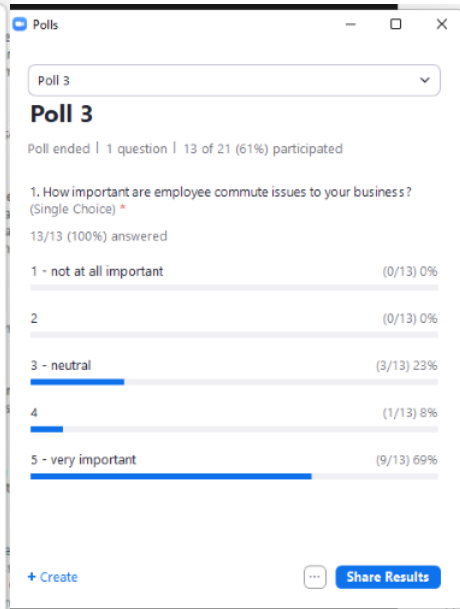
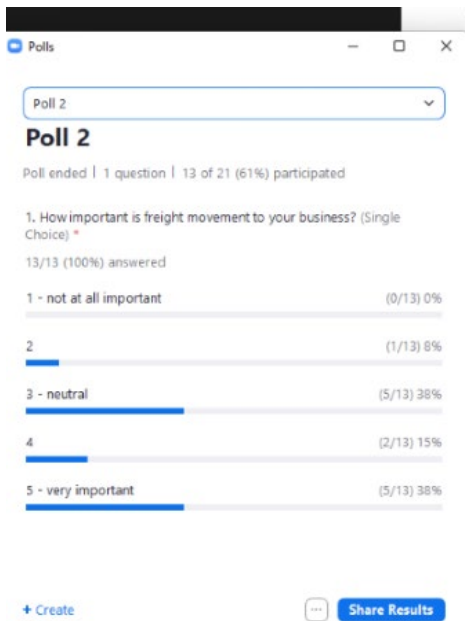
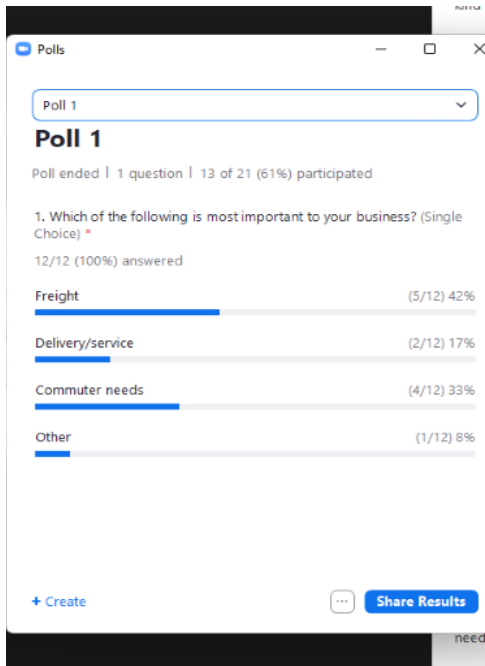
Wrap Up and Next Steps

Ms. Steffen shared the objective of this meeting and explained that the input received will help the Project Management Team and Steering Committees to make better decisions moving forward.

She provided a brief overview of the Steering Committee, including their meeting schedule, roster, and areas of expertise. Ms. Steffen encouraged the participants to stay involved through future meetings or other engagement activities. Ms. Hawkins added that there are two business representatives on the Steering Committee and encouraged the participants to take part in the Steering Committee meetings. Ms. Steffen reminded the participants that this study will not result in a final design or build.

Ms. Steffen and the team thanked the participants for their time and participation and ended the meeting.

Appendix 1. Polls Screenshot



Appendix 2. Presentation

Appendix 3. Chat History

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: We'll get started in a few minutes! Thanks for joining us.

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: Thanks for joining us this morning! We'll get started in a few minutes.

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: Just a reminder that we'll be recording the meeting. The recording will be posted to the website and we are always accepting comments through the website: <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/umo/pages/wmis.aspx>

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement to Mara Krinke, Parametrix: maybe stop sharing

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: The chat will be part of the meeting record, so feel free to add questions there. We will also be monitoring it for any technical issues you might be having.

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: Just a reminder that we'll keep everyone muted during the presentation. If you have questions, please add them to the chat and we'll have some breakout discussions during the meeting. We are recording the meeting.

Annie Herbert, Kaiser Permanente to Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator JLA Public Involvement : HI Brandy! I'm in the commuter category. Thanks.

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement to Annie Herbert, Kaiser Permanente: Thanks Annie!

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: We'll be rejoining the big group in 5 minutes.

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: If you want to add any other thoughts, questions or comments, feel free to add them to the chat.

Melissa Blackburne: 12 employees, 3 coming from Scappoose area

Chris Deffebach, Washington County: One point from our group that I didn't hear bring up was the challenge that service and delivery vehicles would have with HOV lanes since they drive alone generally

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: If you have questions, please type them in the chat. We'll answer clarifying questions at the end of this agenda item.

Don Odermott, Hillsboro: Intel had also mentioned the challenge that transit requires too many seat changes to make commutes viable, plus having to walk from campus-side roadway bus stops to the buildings is a long walk. Better to get stops on campus at the door

Tim Layton – Genentech: Will you be sharing the slides? Thanks

Kate Hawkins (she/her), Metro: Hi Tim. Yes, we will send the presentation slides out to attendees following the meeting.

Jennifer Fetterley, AMR: I need to log out for another meeting. Thank you for the opportunity to participate and I look forward to future conversations.

Nadine Appenbrink (she/her) Parametrix: Thanks, Jen!

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: Here are the questions we'll cover:

- o Is your staffing/workforce impacted by traffic congestion? How?
- o Does your staff use transit – If so/not how? Also, where would your staff benefit the most from transit connections that are faster, more convenient, and reliable?
- o Does congestion impact local delivery and services? How?
- o Do transportation impacts affect your ability to operate or expand your business? How?
- o Does congestion impact your interstate and international shipping? How?

Mara Krinke, Parametrix: Find out more at the study website: <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/UMO/Pages/wmis.aspx>

Brandy (she/her) | Facilitator | JLA Public Involvement: Feel free to reach out directly at Westside.Study@odot.oregon.gov.