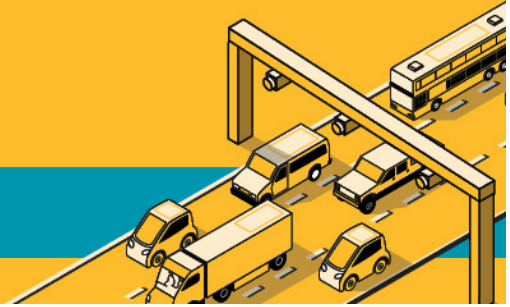


# I-205 Toll Project

## Memorandum



**Date** June 7, 2020  
**To** Hannah Williams, Lucinda Broussard – ODOT  
**From** Bridger Wineman – EI  
**Subject** I-205 Toll Project Summer 2020 Engagement Plan  
**CC** Heather Wills, Anne Presentin, Jennifer Rabby - WSP

### PLAN OVERVIEW

This document outlines the goals, strategies, tools, audiences, and notification strategy to support the education and engagement efforts associated with the I-205 Toll Project environmental review process. The Project will undertake an Environmental Assessment to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. This plan assumes the formal start of the Environmental Assessment will occur on July 13, 2020. A formal stakeholder and public engagement period, including a 45-day comment period will directly follow the launch of the Environmental Assessment and conclude Aug. 26, 2020. Through the engagement activities, the Project Team will share project information with a variety of stakeholders and individuals in the Portland metro area and southwest Washington to solicit input. If the launch date is adjusted, all other dates in this plan will change.

### Social Distancing and Public Safety

Social distancing necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic brings challenges for in-person engagement and outreach, including during the I-205 Toll Project engagement period. To advance community conversations and collect important public feedback during this project milestone, the Project Team will use diverse alternatives to in-person engagement.

Federal guidance is evolving related to public involvement for environmental review processes. The Project Team will update this effort to comply with emerging guidance while maintaining standards for equitable engagement without risks to health. The Project Team is using Interim Guidance from the U.S. Department of Interior – Public Participation and Document Schedules during COVID-19 (4/10/2020) until specific guidance is issued.

### OUTREACH OBJECTIVES

Objectives for the engagement during the I-205 Toll Project stakeholder and public comment period include the following:

- Increase awareness about:
  - How modern toll systems work

- Benefits of tolls
- Opportunities and constraints with the I-205 Toll Project
- Project timelines, alternatives for consideration
- Results of the Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis (VFPA)
- ODOT's approach to equity
- Gather public input on:
  - Draft Purpose and Need Statement, including goals and objectives
  - Draft alternatives
  - Draft evaluation criteria
  - Concerns and potential impacts to consider during the environmental review
- Indicators of success:
  - Number of comments received during the comment period meets the average number submitted during similar comments periods during the Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis (~2,000)
  - The majority of comments received during the comment period from the public are well informed and within the scope of the project Limited requests for additional information are received (less than 10% of comments request additional information)
  - Online open house tool analytics show bounce rate is at or below average for ODOT online open houses
  - Participant demographics are proportionate to the demographics of the I-205 Toll Project corridor
  - Greater than 75% of participants expressed satisfaction with the quality and accessibility of information presented
  - Greater than 75% of participants expressed satisfaction with their opportunity to be heard in the public input process
  - Project information is translated and provided in compatible formats in a timely way
  - Project information is delivered through trusted community sources (e.g. community liaisons, organizations or local jurisdictions)

## KEY QUESTIONS AND OUTPUTS

Regardless of the engagement activity, the Project Team will ask the same set of questions. These questions will be developed with ODOT prior to the start of the comment period, and the questions will likely cover the following subject areas:

- **Personal benefits, concerns and values with current operations of I-205**
  - Example questions:
    - Do you use I-205? (yes/no) Why or why not?
    - Even if you do not travel on I-205 personally, what do you see as the current benefits, effects or challenges on the corridor?
- **Feedback on the draft Purpose and Need Statement**

- Example question: Please indicate your level of agreement with this statement: *“The project’s statement of purpose and need reflects the current congestion problem with the I-205 Toll Project corridor and the need to fund improvements as the reasons for moving forward with the project.”* If you selected disagree or strongly disagree, please tell us why you feel this way [open ended.]
- **Feedback on draft goals and objectives**
  - Example question: Besides the draft goals and objectives presented here, is there anything else that should be included? [open ended]
- **Feedback on the draft alternatives**
  - Example questions:
    - What are your thoughts about each alternative (list)?
    - Are there other toll start/stop points that should be considered?
- **Feedback on the list of topics to be evaluated during the environmental review**
  - Example question: Are there other topics that should be evaluated?
- **Input on the equity concerns related to tolls and strategies to address them**
  - Example questions:
    - As you think about how you travel through your community, how would tolls impact you?
    - What strategies should we consider to address the impacts (mentioned in your previous answer)?
- **How can we best keep you informed and hear your input? (multiple choice and an open ended)**
- **What else would you like the Project Team to consider when planning the I-205 Toll Project?**

We will prepare a comment summary following the stakeholder and public comment period. The report will summarize public input from all types of events/activities and can be used to share this input with members of the Project Team, the Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee and the Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation from all types of events/activities.

## KEY MESSAGES

Messages for public engagement during the stakeholder and public comment period draw from overall project messaging and augment it with I-205 Toll Project corridor specific messages, as follows.

### Primary Messaging for the Oregon Toll Program

- As the risks of COVID-19 are reduced, traffic congestion will return.
- Our congestion problem across our state and region costs \$2 million each day as people and freight spend time in Portland area traffic.
- If we don’t take action, travel delays will further affect everyone’s quality of life and the economy of the entire state.
- The I-205 Toll Project has two purposes: generate revenue and manage traffic congestion.

- Generate revenue
  - o The tolls paid will fund transportation improvements.
  - o The Keep Oregon Moving legislation (House Bill 2017) established a Congestion Relief Fund, which will receive any net proceeds from tolls. The Fund will finance roadway projects, including additional travel lanes, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and transit improvements in or along the roadway.
- Relieve congestion
  - o By charging higher tolls during times of heavy traffic, drivers with flexibility in their schedules can adjust their travel time and free up highway space for the drivers who need it most.
  - o A small decline in drivers during peak travel times makes travel more efficient for all and optimizes the highway space we share.
  - o You only pay if you use the toll road.

### **Messaging Specific to the I-205 Toll Project**

- **About 100,000 vehicles travel the section of I-205 between Stafford Road and OR 213 every day, causing over 6.5 hours of daily traffic congestion.**
  - This section is the only two-lane segment on all of I-205.
  - ODOT has plans to widen the highway and make it seismically resilient are complete, but construction funding is not available.
- **ODOT will examine different toll alternatives to find which best improve traffic flow and raise revenue.**
  - Each toll alternative will have start and stop at different locations. Project staff also will consider a “no build” alternative.
  - Under the National Environmental Policy Act, ODOT must consider the environmental and social effects of the project alternatives and provide opportunities for the public to review and comment on the analysis. The results of the rigorous analysis will be documented in a draft report called an Environmental Assessment.
- **Public input is paramount to the environmental review process.**
  - We want to hear from you about the project’s planned analysis.
  - Submit your comments between July 13 and Aug. 26.
  - Your feedback will help us determine which alternatives to study in the next steps of the environmental review process.

### **I-205 STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The following sections outline specific tactics to be applied for public engagement during this 45-day stakeholder and public comment period. Details about each tactic are laid out, include timing, audience, materials and a description of how each tactic works.

#### **Engagement Timeline and Audiences**

Table 1 matches audiences to activities and tools for engagement during the comment period.

**Table 1: I-205 Public Engagement Audiences and Engagement Activities and Tools**

Audience	Engagement activity/tool
General public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online open house in English and Spanish (including online survey)</li> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• Media, paid social media</li> </ul>
Interested public -I-205 commuters -Nearby residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online open house site in English and Spanish</li> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• eNewsletters and ODOT social media channels</li> <li>• Media, paid social media</li> </ul>
Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee and Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee discussion, advice and recommendations</li> </ul>
Underrepresented and underserved communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online engagement site in English and Spanish</li> <li>• Translated materials (including questionnaire)</li> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• Equity Discussion Groups</li> <li>• Committee presentations</li> <li>• Briefings with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)</li> </ul>
Elected officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online open house</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Committee presentations and briefings (Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation, Boards and Councils)</li> </ul>
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online open house</li> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• Briefings with community-based organizations</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>
Statewide interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online open house</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>
Freight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online open house</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>
Policymakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online open house</li> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• eNewsletter and ODOT social media channels</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>
City and agency partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online engagement site</li> <li>• Regional Partner Agency Staff Updates</li> <li>• Webinars</li> <li>• Newsletters and ODOT social media channels</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>

\*Online open house and survey will be translated into Spanish. The survey also will be translated into Russian, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese for equitable engagement activities.

See below for additional detail on each of the proposed engagement activities and tools.

## **Online Open House**

The online open house will be a hub for I-205 Toll Project information and public feedback. It will be active during the 45-day stakeholder and public comment period anticipated to begin July 13, 2020. The online open house will educate visitors about tolls and the Enhanced Environmental Assessment process and input points; the I-205 Toll Project; the draft Purpose and Need Statement related to the project; and the proposed alternatives.

The site will also host an online survey, which will serve as one of the primary tools for collecting stakeholder and public feedback. The online survey will include multiple choice and write-in responses along with some images and diagrams.

### **Timing**

The online open house will launch on the date at the beginning of the Environmental Assessment process (July 13, 2020) and will remain open for the 45-day stakeholder and public comment period, closing at 11:59 p.m. on August 26, 2020.

## **Webinars**

With social distancing guidance anticipated to continue into summer 2020, in-person open house events are not a viable strategy for public engagement. Reconfiguring open houses into webinars is a cost-effective alternative to in-person open house events and may satisfy federal guidance under current social distancing restrictions. At least three webinars will be hosted on the Zoom platform and may be simultaneously streamed live on YouTube. The webinars may last between 45 and 60 minutes, depending on the level of engagement by participants. Because this situation is rapidly evolving, guidance will continue to be monitored and tactics adjusted accordingly.

Content for the webinars will be similar across each event but will allow flexibility to take questions from participants. A webinar approach will be detailed in a separate document.

Webinars bring the following engagement benefits to supplement the online open house:

- Provide a live presentation component and an interactive question, comment and response opportunity
- Host or transcribe webinars in key languages, as identified
- Allow for minimal registration (only name and email) to help limit barriers to participation
- Ability to record sessions and integrate into the engagement site for future viewing to reach more people at times they're most available

Other attributes of webinars include:

- Digital visuals (such as slides, poster boards, fact sheets, or other printed materials) are clearly visible to remote attendees
- Clear audio
- Streamlined process of capturing and responding to audience questions

- Can be produced without any in-person planning meetings or reliance on external printing vendors, which meets current state public health guidelines

### **Timing**

Webinars will occur during the first half of the 45-day stakeholder and public comment period, while the online open house is live. At least three webinar events will occur within this timeframe to provide multiple options for engaged members of the community (i.e. one during the workday and two evening webinars).

### **Equity Discussion Groups**

If social distancing guidance allows gatherings of up to 25 people, the Project Team will hold up to six, two-hour discussion groups with 10-15 invited stakeholders representing people of color, immigrants and refugees.

- Latino/Latina/Latinx community
- Russian/Slavic community
- Chinese community
- Vietnamese community
- Native American community
- African American community

For ease of scheduling and to effectively reach these populations, the Project Team developed sub-contracts with community-based organizations (CBOs) and Ping Khaw's Community Engagement Liaison program. These groups will facilitate reaching underserved populations to build relationships with face-to-face input opportunities that allow dialogue between the project team and between attendees. The Project Team will work in collaboration with the Community Engagement Liaison program and community-based organizations to develop shared goals around what to achieve with the discussion groups.

The Project Team will provide budget for their services, including coordination, translation, interpretation and participation incentives. This effort also will include distribution of paper versions of the survey in multiple languages to the key equity communities.

The Project Team will prepare a detailed comment and response summary of all the input received from the discussion groups. Up to four consultants to attend each meeting to facilitate the meeting, take notes and present the content. The objective will be to repeat this type of engagement with the same communities during future project phases. This approach was reinforced by positive feedback from the Value Pricing Feasibility Analysis.

### **Materials**

- PowerPoint slides or display boards using information from first two Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee meetings (abbreviated and translated) and webinars
- Fact sheet

- Paper surveys in various languages to distribute to others in the community (not discussion group participants)
- Flyers with link to the online open house

#### **Timing**

We will adjust timing based on state guidance on group gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will collaborate with the CELs to host discussion groups during the 45-day stakeholder and public comment period.

### **Equity and Mobility Advisory Committee and Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation**

Project staff will present information about the comment period and ask the same key questions asked on the online open house site, in webinars and through discussions. Members will be encouraged to share with their networks the engagement opportunities underway.

#### **Materials**

- Print/electronic flyers with link to the online open house
- Presentation

#### **Timing**

We will brief committees during and after the 45-day stakeholder and public comment period in July through September.

### **Committee Presentations and Briefings**

Project staff will present information about the comment period to regional policy committees, statewide organizations and others, as requested. We will encourage members of the groups to visit the online open house and tell their networks about the comment period.

#### **Materials**

- Electronic flyers with link to the online open house
- PowerPoint
- Fact sheet

#### **Key Audiences to Reach**

- Regional policy committees (Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation, Regional Transportation Council, Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee)
- Statewide committees and organizations (e.g., freight, Area Commissions on Transportation from other regions, business)
- Local/regional boards and councils

#### **Timing**

We will brief committees during and after the 45-day comment period.

### **Community-Based Organization Outreach**

Prior to the official start of National Environmental Policy Act process, we will reach out to community-based organizations to discuss the toll projects and during the comment period. Community-based organizations will be engaged to reach audiences in underserved



communities. We designed this effort intentionally to inform community members about the I-205 Toll Project who otherwise might not have previously engaged. Separate from the discussion groups effort, community-based organization outreach seeks to mobilize a wider, more diverse audience to participate in the planned webinars and online open house while also strengthening project relationships with these groups.

### **Objectives**

- Identify community-based organizations who work with historically and currently underserved and underrepresented communities
- Email, call, and direct message (social media) community-based organizations to inform them of our efforts and make the ask to participate
- Develop a Partner Toolkit with our social media content, newsletter content, flyer, and additional messaging to send to community-based organizations for them to disseminate to their audiences
- Collaborate with Community Engagement Liaisons to reach culturally specific communities in their preferred languages

### **Materials**

- Partner Toolkit including:
  - Flyer with link to online open house
  - Fact sheet
  - Notification text for newsletters and social media

### **Key Audiences to Reach**

- Historically and current underserved and underrepresented communities
- Neighborhood associations in and around the project corridor
- Businesses operating in and around the project corridor

### **Timing**

As the 45-day stakeholder and public comment period begins.

## **NOTIFICATION STRATEGY**

The following strategy outlines tactics to let members of the public know about the 45-day stakeholder and public comment period and its engagement opportunities. It assumes a July 13 start date and would need to be updated if the date changes.

### **Timing**

We will complete notification efforts from June through August:

- Monday, July 13: Launch the online open house
  - Website link on project site goes live in English and Spanish
- Monday, July 13: Notification begins
- Webinar events
  - Tuesday, July 22

- Thursday, July 28
- Wednesday, July 30

## Channels

The following table shows channels and platforms recommended to use in sharing information about engagement opportunities with the community. It assumes a July 13 start date and would need to be updated if the date changes.

**Table 2: Notification channels, audiences and general timeline**

Channel	Audience reached	Date of launch	Date of end
Website (with flyer)	All	7/13/2020	8/26/2020
eNewsletter	Project mailing list (~3,000)	7/15/2020 (link) 8/12/2020 (reminder) 9/9/2020 (evaluation)	N/A
News release	Region 1 news release list, plus project mailing list	7/13/2020	N/A
Social media posts on ODOT channels (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) *	ODOT followers;	7/13/2020	8/26/2020
Community-based organization outreach (with toolkit)	List community-based organizations; historically underrepresented	7/10/2020	N/A
Paid digital social media ads* (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)	Zip codes in the Portland metro region; ages above 16	7/13/2020	8/21/2020

Notes: \*See below for more details on these channels

## Social Media Platforms

ODOT maintains a centralized approach to social media, and the Oregon Toll Program does not have an independent presence on social media platforms. The Project Team will collaborate with ODOT's social media lead to develop content (including tone, language, hashtags and recommended images) specific to this effort. Both paid and unpaid social media posts are proposed. The plan will also provide a recommended budget and approach for paid social media advertising.

**Table 3: Social media platforms, handles and purpose**

Platform	ODOT Handle	Purpose
Facebook	<a href="#">@OregonDOT</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share project information and engagement opportunities</li><li>• Build community awareness</li></ul>
Twitter	<a href="#">@OregonDOT</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share project information and engagement opportunities</li><li>• Build community awareness</li></ul>
YouTube	<a href="#">OregonDOT</a> ODOT to create a <a href="#">playlist</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share recordings of webinars</li><li>• Share informational videos about I-205 tolls and how to provide input – See separate video proposal.</li><li>• Build community awareness</li></ul>

It is important to note that many factors beyond the Oregon Toll Program’s control will influence how the social media effort will work. We will schedule posts to allow ODOT some flexibility, where practical, to defer or accelerate posts based on emerging needs across the agency. Based on previous recommendations from ODOT’s communications department, this effort will prioritize Twitter and Facebook as the platforms for project updates.

## EVALUATION OF OUTREACH

Evaluation metrics are an important component to ensure that engagement efforts are effectively targeting and reaching all members of the community and yielding useful results for ODOT as the environmental process progresses. Evaluation efforts post-engagement will help ODOT continue to work towards process equity (as defined in the Equity Framework) and enhance public trust in the agency and the decision process.

Evaluation will determine whether the objectives (outlined on pages 1 and 2 of this document) are achieved and will identify community survey following engagement activities. The survey will be shared with key stakeholders, community groups, and the general public. Also, participants will be invited to complete evaluation forms at the conclusion of each discussion group or webinar event. The Project Team will explore other tools and tactics as needed to ensure we capture adequate and representative information to effectively queue up future outreach and notification strategies.

The Project Team will determine specific questions during the evaluation of efforts based on the specific interests in effectively preparing for future phases of outreach. Questions will touch on the indicators of success identified for public involvement goals identified in the I-205 and I-5 Toll Projects Public Involvement Plan.