

**Summary of Feedback:
Options Open House and Workshop
April 11, 2001**



Meeting Overview

On Wednesday, April 11, 2001, the I-5 Partnership hosted an Options Open House and Workshop at the Vancouver Red Lion Inn at the Quay. The event was a public forum to discuss option packages and evaluation factors being considered by the Task Force for the Portland/Vancouver I-5 corridor. A total of 165 people signed in at the registration table at the April 11th event.

Goals & Format

The goals of the meeting were to gather public input on transportation elements, option packages, and evaluation factors. The open house and workshop format allowed participants to visit informative and interactive stations, staffed by technical and public involvement staff. At the stations participants ideas about which options should be selected for further consideration were solicited. The workshop portion of the meeting consisted of a “create your own option package area.”

Participant Information

Of the 165 people who registered, approximately one-quarter were from Oregon and three-quarters were from Washington.

Transportation Elements

Meeting participants were first asked to identify which transportation elements should be studied further. Please note that these were initial impressions and may differ from responses on the 9 option packages.

Freeway Elements

- There was fairly even support for studying all of the freeway options: addressing localized freeway problems only, adding a 4th lane, and adding a new corridor.

Transit Elements

- Light rail and commuter rail were by far the highest rated transit options, followed by express bus and planned transit service.

- Very little support was registered for studying options in the “other transit service” category which included ideas such as personal rapid transit, helicopters, and jitneys.

Transportation Demand Management Elements

- The three highest rated demand management options were: employer outreach, employer sponsored transit passes, and mixed-use development. These three techniques were almost evenly rated.
- Support for increased funding for carpool and vanpool programs, and increased parking pricing and parking management was not quite as strong as the top three.
- Several comments were received about congestion pricing. This demand management tool was not proposed for any of the options, but several comments were suggested by meeting participants that it should be included.

Participants also commented on land use and freight rail. In general, they expressed support for looking at ways to reduce demand for the freeway through encouraging land use and other policy alternatives. A consistent theme in their feedback was support for encouraging more job creation in Vancouver. In the freight rail category, comments expressed support for encouraging the use of the freight rail system to decrease truck demand for the highway.

Option Package Comments

After getting comments on the elements that should be studied, meeting participants looked at the nine option packages that were prepared for public comment. The meeting feedback form, which was filled out by approximately half of the meeting participants, asked whether not each option packages should be studied further. The rank order of the results is provided below:

Rank	Option	Study	Neutral	Don't Study
1	Option #8: New arterial corridor/Columbia River crossing	46	8	28
2	Option #7: Light rail transit with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	44	10	32
3	Option #3: Light rail transit without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	41	9	29
4	Option #6: Express bus with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	36	9	27
5	Option #2: Express bus without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	34	9	29
6	Option #4: Commuter rail without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	33	8	30
7	Option #9: New freeway corridor	31	8	34
8	Option #1: Baseline 2020	28	13	12
9	Option #5: Planned regional bus system with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	23	11	32

Based on the feedback form results presented in the table on page 2:

- Option #5 (Planned regional bus system with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase) was the only package that respondents clearly indicated should not receive further study.
- Respondents were divided on Option # 9 (New freeway corridor), which received slightly more opposition than support.
- Respondents were also divided on Option #4 (Commuter rail without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase) and Option #2 (Express bus without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase), which received more slightly more support than opposition.
- For the remaining options, respondents indicated that they should all be studied.

As mentioned, not all participants filled out the response forms. Additional feedback on the options was also obtained from written comments as the participants visited each station. Please note that the feedback from the response form in the above table, and the comments below are not entirely consistent. The feedback from those comments follows:

Option 1 Baseline

- Many who commented stated that the baseline conditions are not acceptable.
- Typical comments for this option included: “just the beginning”, “need to do more”, “seems too limited.”

Option 2 Express Bus without capacity increase

- There were a number of negative written comments about this option package.
- The primary concern about this option was that it wouldn't be effective because buses would be stuck in traffic.
- Suggestions for modifying this option included express bus all the way to downtown, not just to the PIR light rail station.

Option 3 Light rail without capacity increase

- There were a number of strong opinions expressed both for and against this option package in the comments.
- Concerns were related to cost, the construction impact of light rail on adjacent neighborhoods, and the lack of highway elements in this package.
- Participants who indicated support for light rail viewed it as the most environmentally friendly option.

Option 4 Commuter Rail without capacity increase

- Although the chart (pg. 2) indicates divided support for this package, the majority of comments about it were negative.
- Typical comments included: “duplication of Interstate light rail”, “commuter rail is very costly to operate”, “not realistic.”
- Comments on this option also indicate that there may have been some confusion between commuter rail and light rail.

Option 5 Planned bus system with capacity increase

- The majority of comments about this option package were negative.
- Concern was expressed about the freeway expansion component: “we can’t build more freeway to solve this problem”, “just adds more pollution”, “temporary at best”
- A few comments suggested adding more transit to this option.

Option 6 Express bus with capacity increase.

- There were a number of both positive and negative written comments about this option.
- Negative comments indicate a lack of confidence that such a bus system will “work” or “solve the problem.”
- Negative comments also focused on the addition of freeway capacity: “adding additional capacity will only put off the problem”, “there is enough highway capacity if used properly.”
- Typical positive comments included: “this is a feasible alternative”, “we must expand our highways to accommodate growth and interstate transportation.”
- As in Option #2, the suggestion was made to modify this option to include express bus service to downtown.

Option 7 Light rail with capacity increase

- The majority of comments about this option package were positive.
- Typical comments included: “best solution, would combine the multi-mode mass transit with freeway increases”, “clean transit, low upkeep”, “this is the best plan, use all your resources to make it happen.”
- Concerns about this package focused on the freeway expansion: “concern here is that freeway expansion will dilute use of transit.”

Option 8 New arterial road/river crossing

- Although the chart (pg. 2) indicates strong support for this option, written comments for and against it were almost evenly divided.
- Positive comments focused on this alternative as helping freight mobility: “Rivergate needs additional access i.e. backdoor”, “yes, a place for trucks”, “real good idea diverting big commercial trucks around city.”
- Positive comments also emphasized the need for a new connection to Hayden Island.
- Negative comments focused on concerns about environmental and neighborhood impacts.

Option 9 New freeway corridor

- There were many negative written comments about this option package.
- The concerns were largely related to the impacts to wildlife and green spaces. A considerable number of people expressed concern that increasing freeway lanes would eventually increase congestion, pollution and sprawl.
- Those in support of the idea believed that the region’s growth will eventually increase the need for a west side freeway connection. Some in support appeared to like the concept of a west side freeway, but hadn’t thought about it prior to attending the meeting. Several

suggested alternate locations. One comment suggested this option was the best alternative from an environmental justice perspective because it bypasses N/NE Portland and avoids the need for additional lanes on I-5.

Additional Options Suggested by Participants:

There were many additional options suggested. Some key themes were:

- More aggressive demand management and land use measures were among the most common suggestions. Of these, many stressed a need to encourage job growth in Clark County.
- Many were combinations of existing options to:
 - Maximize capacity by combining freeway, arterial bridge and/or transit options, or
 - Maximize transit by combining several transit options.
- Many suggested alternate locations for a new corridor or for an arterial bridge.
- Several asked for a stricter no-build alternative.
- Several people suggested tolls as part of various packages.

Responses to Structured Questions on Packages:

The final exercise for participants regarding options was to comment on some of the alternatives within the option packages. The following conclusions can be reached based on their input:

- Feedback indicates desire to see a more extensive transit solution in Clark County (more than just I-5) whether that system is light rail or express bus.
- If a 4th lane is added to the highway there is very little support among respondents for a general purpose lane. There was a high degree of support for HOV or reversible lanes. (Please note, however, that several comments were received at the open house which indicate that some people are very strongly opposed to HOV lanes.)
- If Option 8 is pursued, there is more support for a longer arterial road, extending south and north of the Columbia River.
- Meeting participants supported adding a third lane to I-5 between Delta Park to Lombard.

Evaluation Measures

The final station for participants was to provide feedback on the proposed evaluation measures. Participants were given seven tokens and asked to distribute them among the seven proposed evaluation measures based on how important they thought the measure was for the Task Force to consider. The following table summarizes the results.

Evaluation Factor	# of Tokens
Maintain or Enhance Quality Life	122
Maintain or Improve Transportation Performance	112
Minimize Impacts to the Environment	110
Support Freight and Goods Movement & Regional Economy	103
Support Regional Land Use Plans	70
Distribute Benefits, Costs, & Impacts Equitably	45
Evaluate Project Capitol/Operation Costs	39

Perhaps the two most interesting ratings were the evaluation factors that received the least number of tokens.

- Past experience indicates that project cost is a significant factor to the public, while meeting participants rated project cost as the least important factor. This factor is likely to become more important as the I-5 Partnership process proceeds and the public begins to see more firm proposals and recommendations from the Task Force.
- Meeting participants also rated distribution of benefits, costs and impacts equitably as relatively unimportant. It should be noted that this measure may have been difficult for some participants to understand and that this factor may not be as important to the individuals who attended this open house as it may be to others in the corridor, specifically in North and Northeast Portland.

The comments on evaluation criteria indicate that there are a few criteria that meeting participants suggest adding. They are:

- Measuring the energy efficiency of the options
- Analyzing the cost and benefit of the options
- Analyzing the life cycle cost of each option.