

Options Community Forum May 10, 2001 Summary of Results



Meeting Overview

On Thursday, May 10, 2001, the I-5 Partnership hosted an Options Open House and Community Forum Meeting at the Lloyd Center Double Tree Hotel. 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 118 people signed in at the registration table at the May 10th event – about 50 of these came just to the open house, and about 70 participated in the Community Forum meeting. This document summarizes the feedback from the Community Forum portion of the meeting. A separate document summarizes the feedback from the open house portion of the meeting.

Goals & Format

The May 10th meeting was the second of six Community Forum meetings that will be held. The goal of the meeting was to gather input from corridor stakeholders on: the draft Problem, Vision and Values Statement, the transportation option packages recommended for technical analysis by the Task Force, and the proposed evaluation factors that will be used to assess the option packages over the summer. Participants in the meeting were seated in groups of 6-10 people, most tables included a Task Force member. Each table was staffed by a facilitator. A brief presentation was made on each area for feedback (problem statement, option packages and evaluation factors). Participants then discussed their reaction to the recommendations and proposals of the Task Force and filled out a feedback form for each area of input. An open comment period was also held. Members of the public were invited to participate in the meeting along with designated Community Forum members.

Participant Information

Of the 72 Community Forum response forms that were submitted, 35 people identified that they live in Oregon and 28 people identified that they live in Washington; 9 people did not identify their state of residence.

Of the 72 people returning response forms 27 were designated Community Forum members, 28 were members of the public, and 10 were Task Force members.

Problem, Vision, and Value Statement

Ratings by participants showed overall support for adoption of the Problem, Vision and Values Statement. Comments, however, indicate that there are a few specific areas to improve the statement.

Response form results:	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
“We should adopt the proposed Problem, Vision, and Values Statement”	45	4	7

There were four areas of concern that were consistently raised by the Community Forum meeting participants:

- *Emphasis on congestion as the problem:* These comments indicate that some people feel the problem is not congestion, but rather, the issues are access to jobs and providing for the movement of freight despite the congestion.
- *Environmental Justice and Public Health:* Several comments were received about the need to ensure that the development of the plan and its implementation measures will follow Environmental Justice principles. A related concern was that the vision statement does not clearly address the need to protect air quality and public health in the options that are chosen for the corridor.
- *Land Use:* Some people felt that the vision statement needed to be clear that the plan will address transportation and land use policies to address the corridor’s problems.
- *Safety:* Several comments indicate that the vision statement does not adequately address the issue of safety.

Option Package Comments

After getting comments on the Problem, Vision, and Value Statement, meeting participants looked at the nine option packages prepared for public comment. The meeting feedback form gathered feedback on the Task Force’s recommendation to continue, discontinue, or defer study on each option package. Response form results are provided below:

Was Open House Input Consistent with Task Force Recommendation?	Option	Study	Neutral	Don’t Study
Yes	1: Study Baseline 2020	34	2	16
Unclear	2: Study Express bus without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	24	5	24
Yes	3: Study Light rail transit without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	31	3	15

Yes	4: Defer study of Commuter rail without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase (until freight rail study is complete)	35	5	27
Yes	5: Not study Regional bus system with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase (combine with option 6)	31	4	14
Yes	6: Study Express bus with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase (modify to include service to downtown Portland)	35	7	14
Yes	7: Study Light rail transit with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	33	3	17
Yes	8: Study New arterial corridor/Columbia River crossing	32	7	14
Yes	9: Not Study New freeway corridor	32	2	18
Yes	The range of Option Packages recommended for study is appropriate	35	2	13

The response form results reveal whether or not participants agree with the Task Force’s recommendation to *study* options. The written comments offer some insights as to what participants liked and did not like about the option packages.

Option 1: Study Baseline

- Support for studying the baseline was consistent; the baseline was generally viewed as an appropriate tool for comparing advantages and disadvantages between other option packages.
- Two concerns were raised about the Baseline option. Some people were concerned that the option should include more aggressive transportation demand management measures with a greater emphasis on employer outreach for flextime, telecommuting, and a possible surcharge for peak hour users. Others were concerned that the baseline option does not go far enough in addressing the corridor problems. There were several suggestions to add transit or river crossing elements to this option.

Option 2: Study Express Bus without capacity increase

- The ratings for this option show divided opinion about whether this option should be studied.
- The most common concerns about this option were that express bus service doesn't continue through to downtown Portland and that the capacity increase would be inadequate.

Option 3: Study Light rail without capacity increase

- The majority of participants indicated support for this option, however, comments were about evenly divided in support of light rail and in opposition to light rail. Comments about light rail indicated that cost and cost effectiveness were the biggest concerns.

Option 4: Defer Study of Commuter Rail without capacity increase (until freight rail study results are available)

- Participants supported the recommendation to defer study of commuter rail.
- Comments were divided in support and opposition to the recommendation. The most common comment was that commuter rail should not be considered as a stand-alone option, but rather combined with freeway and transit options.

Option 5: Not study Planned bus system with capacity increase (combine with Option 6)

- The response form reveals strong support for the Task Force's recommendation to fold option 5 into option 6.

Option 6: Study Express bus to downtown Portland with capacity increase (includes new Columbia River crossing)

- Participants supported the recommendation to study this option.
- Few comments were given about this option and no clear themes emerge from the comments.

Option 7: Study Light rail with capacity increase (includes new Columbia River crossing)

- Response forms indicate support for studying this option.
- Comments focused primarily on concerns about the option. Several comments were focused on the negative impacts of expanding the freeway, including possible displacements and increased traffic. Concerns about the cost and cost effectiveness of light rail were also raised.

Option 8: Study New arterial road with Columbia River crossing

- While support for this option was strong in the response form, comments about the option primarily reflected concerns.
- Concerns focused on concerns about neighborhood impacts related to an increase in the capacity for cars, a feeling that the option only helps local freight, and that it should extend over the Willamette River to US 30.

Option 9: Not study New freeway corridor

- The majority of responses support the Task Force's recommendation on this option.
- Comments about this option all supported discontinuing further study.

Range of Option Packages

Most participants indicated support for the range of packages suggested by the Task Force. Written comments indicate a few areas that should be looked at as the evaluation proceeds:

- *Land Use:* Making sure that land use options and policies are integrated into the option packages/recommendations.
- *Transportation Demand Management:* Making sure that a strong transportation demand management element is considered.
- *Bike/Pedestrian:* As options are designed opportunities for improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the corridor should be examined.
- *BNSF Rail Bridge:* Examine the benefits to I-5 and a reduction in the number of freeway bridge lifts if the railroad bridge span is moved to the south.

Evaluation Measures

Most participants supported the range of evaluation factors.

Response form results:	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
“The proposed Evaluation Factors will provide the important information needed to compare the options and elements.”	38	1	7

Comments about the evaluation measures were varied and generally supportive of the proposed evaluation factors. With the exception of suggestions to weight the factors, and to include a formal cost-benefit analysis in the evaluation, the proposed evaluation factors take into account the suggestions that were made by participants.