

# Summary of Feedback from the Options Open House May 10, 2001



## 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 10<sup>th</sup> event.

### *Goals & Format*

The primary goal of the meeting was to gather public input on transportation option packages recommended for technical analysis by the Task Force. Participants also provided feedback on the project's evaluation factors and draft Problem, Vision and Values Statement. The open house format allowed participants to visit informative and interactive stations, staffed by technical and public involvement staff. Participants visited a series of stations that presented descriptions of each option package and an explanation of the Task Force's recommendation to study, defer or discontinue study. Attendees provided feedback on individual response forms. Written comments were submitted on post-it notes placed on flipcharts at each station.

### *Participant Information*

Of the 118 people who registered, 76 identified that they live in Oregon and 35 identified that they live in Washington.

## Problem, Vision, and Value Statement

### 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, which was filled out by approximately 1/2 of the meeting participants, gathered feedback on the Task Force's recommendation to continue, discontinue, or defer study on each option package. Response form results are provided below:

<b>Task Force &amp; Public Recommendation Consistent?</b>	<b>Option</b>	<b>Study</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Don't Study</b>
<b>Yes</b>	1: Study Baseline 2020	32	4	10
<b>Yes</b>	2: Study Express bus without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	23	7	16
<b>Yes</b>	3: Study Light rail transit without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	36	2	7
<b>Yes</b>	4: Defer study of Commuter rail without corridor-wide freeway capacity increase (until freight rail study is complete)	27	5	
<b>Yes</b>	5: Not study Regional bus system with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase (combine with option 6)	27	10	5
<b>Unclear</b>	6: Study Express bus with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase (modify to include service to downtown Portland)	20	6	17
<b>Yes</b>	7: Study Light rail transit with corridor-wide freeway capacity increase	28	1	18
<b>Unclear</b>	8: Study New arterial corridor/Columbia River crossing	21	7	18
<b>Yes</b>	9: Not Study New freeway corridor	28	2	10

Written comments on the option package recommendations were collected and were generally consistent with response form results. Therefore, the following discussion of public input on option packages draws from both sources of input. The response form results reveal whether or not participants agree with the Task Force's recommendation to *study* options.

### **Option 1 Study Baseline**

- Positive support for studying the baseline was consistent; the baseline was generally viewed as an adequate tool for comparing advantages and disadvantages between other option packages.
- The most common concerns about the baseline were that it didn't address the river crossing and other major freeway, and transit options.

### **Option 2 Study Express Bus without capacity increase**

- The majority of comments about this option package were positive.
- Those in favor of studying this option thought analysis would reveal the effectiveness of bus transit.
- The primary concern about this option was that it wouldn't be effective because buses would be driving in congested traffic.

### **Option 3 Study Light rail without capacity increase**

- The majority of participants indicated support for light rail; typical comments include: "best idea," "great capacity and efficiency", and "we need a regional rail system."
- Concerns, which were predominately voiced by Washington residents, were related to cost and low rider ship.

### **Option 4 Defer Study of Computer Rail without capacity increase (until freight rail study results are available)**

- Although feedback supports the Task Force's recommendation to defer study of this option, many participants commented that commuter rail merits further consideration.
- Concerns about commuter rail were typically related to cost and the utility of a shorter (e.g. Portland/Vancouver) versus a longer (Seattle/Salem) route.

### **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.
- Nearly all written comments didn't support the freeway capacity increase component of option 5. Typical comments include: "expansion will hurt neighborhoods adjacent to I-5" and "widening the freeway will only encourage more people to use I-5."

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

- Support for and against the Task Force's recommendation on this option was almost evenly divided.
- Negative comments, most often voiced by Oregon residents, indicate a strong opposition to freeway capacity increases.
- Additional concerns were raised about creating a bus system that doesn't include light rail or land use planning elements.

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

- Support for and against the Task Force's recommendation on this option was almost evenly divided.

- Typical comments in support of the recommendation include: “nice option to meet freight and commuter needs,” “get light rail going first then freeway expansion,” and “yes it is all good!”
- Concerns about this package focused on the freeway expansion: “you cannot build your way out of congestion by adding new lanes.”

### **Option 8 Study New arterial road with Columbia River crossing**

- Support for and against the Task Force’s recommendation on this option was almost evenly divided.
- Positive comments focused on this alternative’s ability to improve freight mobility and separate commuter from and local traffic: “Consider options for separate freight and commuter (routes).”
- Negative comments focused on concerns about environmental and neighborhood impacts related to an increase in the number of car lanes; several comments in support of studying this option also raised these concerns.

### **Option 9 Not study New freeway corridor**

- The majority of comments support the Task Force’s recommendation on this option.
- The concerns about this option package were largely related to the impacts to wildlife and green spaces. A considerably number of people expressed concern that increasing freeway lanes would eventually increase congestion, pollution and sprawl: “very damaging, doesn’t address major issues well.”
- Those in support of the idea believed that a new freeway corridor would route traffic around the metro area.

### **Other Transportation Options**

Most participants’ agreed with the statement: The range of Option Packages recommended for study by the Task Force is appropriate. There were a few individual comments on other transportation options, which include support for: personal rapid transit, a combination of commuter rail and light rail, freeway mitigation plans for N/NE Portland, and commuter ferries.

### **Special Analysis Areas**

Most comments suggest that improving special analysis areas is a priority. Concern about displacement and freeway widening was expressed.

## **Land Use & Rail Assessments**

### **Land Use Assessment**

There was widespread support for the direction of the land use assessment. There was concern that land use principles will not be adequately incorporated into the option packages.

## **Rail Analysis**

Written comments on the rail assessment were supportive.

## **Evaluation Measures**

The final meeting station asked for 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 think the measure is for the Task Force to consider. The following table summarizes the results.

<b>Evaluation Factor</b>	<b># of Tokens</b>
Maintain or Enhance Quality Life	73
Minimize Impacts to the Environment	50
Maintain or Improve Transportation Performance	46
Support Freight and Goods Movement & Regional Economy	46
Support Regional Land Use Plans	30
Distribute Benefits, Costs, & Impacts Equitably	21
Evaluate Project Capitol/Operation Costs	16

Most participants' agreed with the statement: The proposed Evaluation Factors will provide the important information needed to compare the options and elements. 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.

The measures most highly rated by the token exercise, Maintain or Enhance Quality Life and Minimize Impacts to the Environment, were also prioritized by participants who submitted written comments.