

OR 126 Expressway Management Plan (EMP) Community Design Open House Summary

ODOT hosted a Community Design Open House from 5:30 pm-7:00 pm on November 17, 2005 at Thurston High School. The open house was attended by 27 people. Participants were invited to review design concepts for the areas near OR 126 and 42nd, 52nd and Main streets. Participants were encouraged to record their ideas and concerns about each of these design concepts on the maps or to draw their own ideas on blank maps, and to complete the comment form.

1. Comment form summary

Eleven participants completed the comment form. A summary of their responses is provided here. The actual comment forms are attached.

Participant profile

Of the eleven comment forms completed, nine of the forms came from participants with a Springfield zip code and one came from a participant with a Eugene zip code. Eight of the participants reported their zip code as 97478.

Most of the participants reported living near OR 126 or using OR 126 for through travel as the reason they are interested in improvements to or near OR 126. Participants also responded that they owned property or worked in the area.

Roughly equal proportions of participants reported that 42nd, 52nd and Main streets were the closest intersections or interchanges to their home, business or property.

Participant travel patterns

Most participants reported using OR 126 daily. Participants reported using the expressway for a variety of trip lengths ranging from 2-5 miles to more than 10 miles. Most participants use the expressway for trips to work or school or for shopping or errands.

Goals and objectives

Participants were asked what kinds of things the PMT and Ad Hoc Steering Committee should consider as they make decisions on this project. Responses included:

- Costs
- Safety
- Impacts on existing business, homes and property
- Funding
- Serve travel patterns – where are people going to and coming from?
- Providing bike routes
- Ease congestion on 42nd Street
- Provide for long term solution at 42nd Street
- Provide for future traffic volumes
- Increase throughput at intersections
- Provide grade-separation at 52nd Street

Problems and solutions

Participants were asked what problems they experience on OR 126. Responses included:

- Back up at 42nd Street due to two unsynchronized lights and roadway blockages due to trains during their hours of operation (2 to 6 p.m.)
- Bottleneck at Main Street and OR 126 westbound in the morning.
- Delay while making a left turn onto N. 42nd St from westbound off ramp OR-126 (reported as being up to six minutes)
- Congestion at 42nd Street and 52nd Street intersections
- Safety problems at 52nd Street due to the unexpected traffic signal
- Traffic volume at peak periods of travel

Participants were asked what ideas they have for improving OR 126. Responses included:

- Add/extend a two-lane ramp cross-section closer to OR 126 traffic at the 42nd Street interchange (eastbound off-ramp from OR 126 to N. 42nd St.)
- Revamp configuration of WB OR 126 off ramp onto N. 42nd St
- Lessen radius (left) of High Banks Rd. as it curves south toward OR 126 (at the 52nd Street intersection)
- Consider a grade-separated interchange at 52nd Street and OR 126.
- 52nd Street concept with a 3 lane roundabout is a good idea with a non-stop entrance from High Banks headed west
- Consider a two-lane metered on-ramp at Main Street westbound
- Existing lane(s) should accommodate a right turn onto WB Main St (Business OR 126)
- Eliminate the fly-by ramp (SB OR 126 onto westbound Main St) and further widen
- Add consistent street trees in median and on sides of 126

2. Map comment summary

Participants noted a variety of comments directly on drawings of design concepts and blank aerials of the areas near 42nd, 52nd and Main streets. A transcription of each comment is attached to this summary.

42nd Street Interchange

Participants noted that the OR 126/42nd Street interchange and 42nd Street itself are congested today, and cited the railroad crossing south of the interchange and unsynchronized traffic signals (at the ramp terminals and at the Olympic Street intersection) as some of the problems in the area. Other issues were related to the local street system, such as safety while making turns or access to Wal-Mart and other commercial uses to the west.

Participants noted that two-lane on- and off-ramps were needed in both directions at the 42nd Street interchange regardless of the design. Some participants noted that they preferred the traditional diamond concept.

52nd Street Intersection

Participants noted that the intersection of OR 126 and 52nd Street is congested today, and the intersection of Highbanks Road/52nd Street. They generally preferred the partial cloverleaf and traditional diamond concepts and did not like the roundabout concept. A new concept with a fly-over to Highbanks Road was suggested and drawn.

Main Street Intersection

Participants noted that Main Street is approached as a highway by some drivers and needs some improvements to clarify its purpose, as well as needing a center turn lane on Main Street to provide better access to businesses.

Participants noted that the continuous flow concept was confusing and thought that options needed to improve flow on Main Street. Participants were concerned about traffic on nearby local streets such as 58th Street and access to businesses near the intersection. A new concept labeled a reverse single point diamond was drawn.

Transcription of map comments

The following comments were recorded by open house participants directly onto concept maps. The comments are transcriptions of the notes made by participants where possible. The comments were only revised for clarity.

OR 126 and 42nd Street

Existing conditions

- The problem statement indicates congestion problems on the future at 42nd Street. How about now?
- There are conflicts at the westbound ramp onto 42nd Street.
- At night, it is difficult to see on OR 126 at the exit ramps when you are westbound.
- The signals at Olympic and the ramp to OR 126 are close together and not synchronized leading to traffic back-ups.
- Traffic often backs up due to the railroad crossing at 42nd Street. It should be grade separated.
- Left turns onto OR 126 are a problem for school buses.
- Traffic has increased on southbound 42nd Street in recent years.
- There are issues with getting on OR 126 westbound from northbound 42nd.
- Weyerhaeuser intersection backs up traffic. Maybe have one light instead of two.
- Spacing is too close between east bound ramps and Olympic.
- Left turn from eastbound ramp to 42nd Street is a problem.
- In the evening, traffic queues onto Highway waiting to turn left at 42nd from the eastbound off-ramp.
- Future development at 42nd and Marcola will occur.
- Issues with 42nd being a two-lane road since there is a school bus facility and truck traffic on 42nd. There is problem with rear-end crashes.

Concept A1- Folded Diamond

- Westbound ramps should have a flashing red or yellow light at certain hours creating a three-way stop since traffic volumes are low.
- 4 lanes on 42nd is a good idea. Today, people get backed-up waiting for others to turn.
- Consider having two lanes on the on and off-ramps.
- The south access variant would solve the immediate issue near interchange but not the problems on 42nd Street.

Concept A2- Traditional Diamond

- Not a bad idea.
- This option is preferred with modification to roadway south of interchange.
- Too much money. (response by another participant: something needs to be done)
- No light, please at the on-ramp to OR 126 westbound.
- Eastbound ramps should be a higher priority than westbound ramps.
- A cloverleaf over the wetlands would save lives.
- Lost connection at Olympic and 42nd does not seem like a good idea.

OR 126 and 52nd Street

Existing conditions and needs

- Please install trail west of 52nd Street.
- School buses stop at first street south of OR 126 at 52nd. School buses also stop at cul-de-sacs along G Street.
- Lots of log trucks along G Street.
- Highbanks/52nd Street is the real problem in this area.
- It is difficult to get onto cross streets from 52nd Street.
- Highbanks Rd is congested at shift change.

Concept B1-Expanded intersection

- Other options are better than a new traffic signal.
- Would Highbanks Rd be an alternative route to OR 126 bypassing Main Street

Concept B2- Offset intersection

- Access would be diversified, but two traffic signals would hardly alleviate existing congestion, particularly the eastbound 126 left turn onto the revamped Highbanks Rd.
- Not going to cut it.

Concept B3- 3 lane roundabout

- No roundabout (3 participants noted this suggestion)
- Roundabout with some lead in curvature of roadway would slow down traffic which would be good for the neighborhood.
- The roundabout would work if the speed limit on OR 126 was reduced from 55 mph.
- Not roundabout fans – from east and England – but it looks good on paper
- Roundabouts don't work given the traffic volumes at this location (2 participants noted this).
- Roundabout does not belong on freeway.
- One participant noted that initially they did not understand the drivers would enter the roundabout at low speed. They assumed the roundabout would function at high speed.
- Prefer diamond with signals on side streets.
- Consider a second roundabout at 52nd Street and Highbanks Rd.
- Consider a double right turn onto OR 126 ramps from Highbanks Rd with stop light.

Concept B4- Traditional Diamond

- Maybe two lanes for left and right turns at off ramps.
- Good idea.
- This is a great solution.
- Prefer this solution to roundabout.

Concept B5- Partial Cloverleaf

- Prefer partial cloverleaf (2 participants noted this as their favorite option).

New design suggested: east to High Banks flyover:

- Eastbound traffic exiting OR 126 at 52nd Street flies over OR 126 to Highbanks Rd.
- Exit ramp from OR 126 westbound with a direct connection to Highbanks Rd.

OR 126 and Main Street

Existing conditions and needs

- Need a center left turn lane on Main Street to provide access to Safeway and 58th Street.
- Intersection of 58th Street and Main Street has many crashes – high school traffic.
- Main Street is viewed as a highway by some drivers.
- Elevation views or topography information would be nice to have.
- Better infrastructure is needed on surface streets.
- ODOT ROW has policing/social issues.

Concept C1- Expanded intersection

- Three lanes of traffic in each direction on Main Street seem to destroy the sense of neighborhood.
- This option makes more sense.
- Eliminating southbound rights and then lefts into Safeway.
- What about a configuration with one through lane, one through/left and one left turn lane.

Concept C2- Expressway continuity

- Not a good flow for Main Street users.
- How does a left turn to Jasper happen?
- More viable than roundabout.
- There would be too much back-up at 58th and mall entrance (Petco) since this is the only entrance with this scheme.

Concept C3- 3 lane roundabout

- Nightmare!
- Given the trips, this is an impossible solution.
- Preserve the sense of place – slow down traffic speeds.
- The roundabout works only if everyone is keyed in to the intersection type. This is better here than at 52nd Street.
- Traffic on 58th Street backs up now due to the high school.
- Back streets and 58th Street would need to be upgraded for access.

Concept C4- Single-point diamond interchange

- Consider a direct-connect ramp to 58th Street and Jasper Road and leave existing ramps to Main Street.
- Important to allow right turn off OR 126 (eastbound) with access to Safeway.
- This concept is a good idea if the 2000 plan for Jasper Road was implemented.
- This concept directs traffic to Jasper Road and not to OR 126.

- This concept ruins the sense of place for area and creates an “alien space” between ramps.
- This concept is good because the interchange is grade-separated.

Concept C5- Continuous flow at-grade intersection

- Too complicated. Too metropolis-like (not neighborhood-friendly). No easy access to Safeway area coming off eastbound OR 126.

Concept C6- Traditional diamond interchange

- Need two lane westbound on-ramp to OR 126. It backs up today.
- This option would make Jasper work better, but it would not make OR 126 work better.
- Potential interim phase is favorable except for the impact that it would have on existing structures and property. It would also create too many signalized intersections between 54th and 58th streets. This is the most ped/bike friendly concept.

Suggested concept: Reverse single point diamond