

# Sounding Board Meeting # 9 Summary

**Meeting Date:** 12.17.2018

**Meeting Time:** 5pm-7pm

**Meeting Location:** Next Stop Center, 1099 Olive Street, Eugene, Oregon

## **Attendance:**

Sounding Board Members:

- Steve Baker, UO
- Mike DeLuise, ATC
- Jennifer Webster, Lane County Public Health
- Bill Randall, Planning Commission
- Pete Barron, LTD Accessible Transportation Committee
- Gerry Gaydos, Strategic Planning Committee

Staff:

- Terri Harding, City of Eugene
- Chris Henry, City of Eugene
- Andrew Martin, LTD
- Therese Lang, LTD
- Jeanne Lawson, (Facilitator) JLA Public Involvement
- Adrienne DeDona, JLA Public Involvement

## **1. Welcome & Introductions – Chris Henry (City) & Jeanne Lawson (JLA Public Involvement)**

Jeanne opened the meeting and Chris welcomed the group to the meeting and asked members to introduce themselves. Chris reviewed the primary purpose of the meeting, which would be to review the possible range of investment package options and confirm whether it's the right set to carry forward to decision-makers and the community.

Jeanne reviewed the meeting agenda. The agenda was as follows:

1. Provide an update on the project
2. Preview the public outreach efforts and feedback received
3. Review and provide input on the range of proposed investment package options to carry forward to decision-makers and the community
4. Discuss next steps and project timeline

## **2. Project Update– Andrew Martin (LTD) & Adrienne DeDona (JLA Public Involvement)**

Andrew recapped what has happened with the project since the Sounding Board last met. That includes, publishing the Alternatives Analysis and sharing it with the public to get their feedback on the corridor alternatives. The feedback from the community was coupled with the findings from the technical analysis completed, including ridership modeling and comparison with the evaluation criteria,

to produce a range of possible investment package options to share with the community to get their feedback on possible preferences. Andrew noted that in the coming months, there will be additional community engagement opportunities focus on gathering preferences on the system level investment packages.

Adrienne reviewed the outreach and engagement activities that took place over the summer and fall since the last Sounding Board meeting and explained that the focus of our outreach effort was to:

- Share the key findings from the Alternatives Analysis.
- Identify what community members felt were the most important criteria for assessing the various investment options.
- Hear which alternatives were the most appropriate for each corridor.

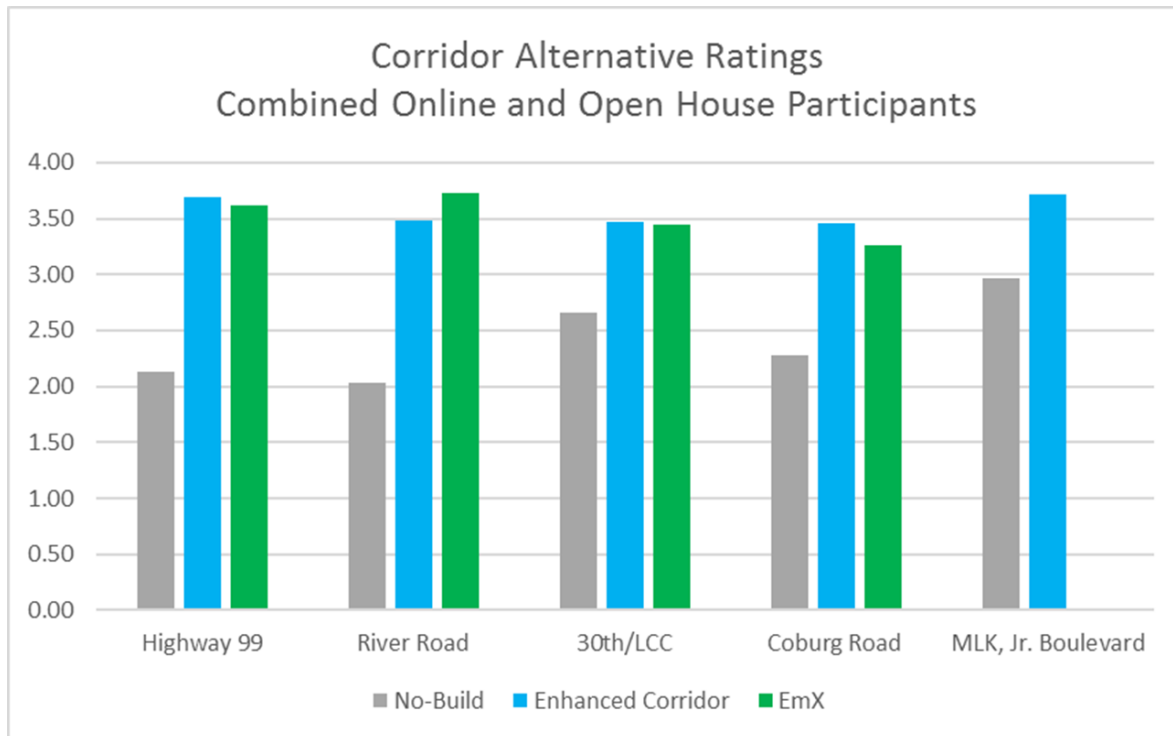
The engagement activities that occurred in conjunction with the release of the Alternatives Analysis were as follows:

- Public comment period Sept 10 - Oct 10, 2018
- Four in-person open houses were held on each corridor – 112 people attended these meetings
- An on-line open house was available – 245 responses were received
- An webinar was held for other agencies and Tribes– several federal and state agencies participated
- Six listening sessions were held with a variety of key stakeholder groups, such as: neighborhood leaders, schools and youth, businesses, Spanish language community, affordable housing community, seniors and Active Transportation representatives – 96 people participated
- Presentations were made to several community groups–107 people participated in these meetings
- Over the course of the summer leading up to the release of the Alternatives Analysis, 12 Tabling events were held – approximately 500 people were reached
- A press release, newspaper articles and other social media announcements were made throughout the summer and fall. In addition, several e-newsletter articles were sent to a list of over 900 people.

Adrienne summarized the key themes that were heard from the community, including:

- The most important criteria used to consider when evaluating the alternatives were:
  - Bike/ped investments
  - Transit travel time
  - Jobs and population served
  - Ridership
  - Annual operating cost
- It was important to note that criteria which consider potential benefits were generally rated as more important than criteria which consider potential adverse impacts
- Operating cost was deemed to be more important criterion than capital cost

Adrienne shared the following graph with the Sounding Board and reviewed what was heard from the community with regard to the potential alternatives considered for each corridor:



There was strong support for making investments, especially with regard to Highway 99 and River Road.

For MLK, Jr. Boulevard, which didn't include an EmX option, the Enhanced Corridor option was rated more favorably than the No-Build option. Chris added that the City has submitted for grant funding to implement Business Access Transit (BAT) lanes on MLK, Jr. Boulevard at activity centers, which is a key element of the Enhanced Corridor Alternative. Chris added that other grant funds are being pursued for Highway 99 and River Road as well to implement safer crossings for people walking and biking.

Questions and comments from the Sounding Board Members included:

- Was closed captioning provided on the overview video? *Adrienne responded that, yes, closed captioning was available on the overview video as well as Spanish subtitles. Chris added that at each open house and listening session, the video was shown with subtitles.*
- The demographics didn't seem to be representative of the Eugene community. Respondents tended to be in the higher income bracket. *Chris responded that the outreach wasn't intended to be statistically valid, however, there were additional outreach efforts targeted to lower income groups which were not represented in the demographic results.*
- Information should be shared with the community on what Active Transportation means, as well as statistics on creating walkable communities and how it results in increasing property values, and overall community benefits.
- The open-ended comments seemed to more negative than the other comments about the alternatives.
- In future engagement materials show a graph of ridership over time.
- The demographic results showed a difference in age vs. the in-person participation and the online participation. The in-person respondents seemed to be quite a bit older. Seems like

there should have been more student participation based on the percentage of UofO students in the community.

### 3. Investment Packages – Andrew Martin (LTD)

Andrew explained how the range of proposed investment packages was developed. The most promising corridor options were combined into a full set of future system improvements based on which options best meet project goals and had community support. These investment packages are intended to prioritize projects for near-term (10-year) funding, design and construction. The investment “Packages” all include combinations of No-Build, Enhanced Corridor, and EmX alternatives and were evaluated using criteria that reflect costs and benefits of packages as a whole. Andrew explained that a key consideration will be the capacity to fund the capital investment (implementation) and ongoing operations and maintenance (O&M) costs associated with each package.

Andrew also noted that during the analysis, not many differentiating factors were found with regard to the environment. However, several environmental topics were assessed, such as:

- Air Quality
- Energy, Sustainability, and Greenhouse Gases
- Geology and Seismic
- Hazardous Materials
- Utilities
- Visual and Aesthetic Resources

Andrew said that the benefits and impacts of each investment package are proportional to level of investment. For example, EmX alternatives have more benefits/impacts than Enhanced Corridor alternatives.

Andrew shared the following table showing the proposed range of investment package options:

	Corridor				
Investment Package	Highway 99	River Road	30th Avenue to LCC	Coburg Road	MLK, Junior Boulevard
Enhanced Corridor Package	Enhanced Corridor	Enhanced Corridor	Enhanced Corridor	Enhanced Corridor	Enhanced Corridor
Package A	Enhanced Corridor	EmX	No-Build	No-Build	No-Build
Package B	Enhanced Corridor	EmX	No-Build	Enhanced Corridor	Enhanced Corridor
Package C	Enhanced Corridor	EmX	Enhanced Corridor	Enhanced Corridor	Enhanced Corridor
EmX Package	EmX	EmX	EmX	EmX	Enhanced Corridor

Andrew clarified that No-Build, means that only changes that are already planned as part of other programs would occur within the 10 year timeframe, but that it doesn't mean not ever. He added that it's important to note that, while the No-Build alternatives are shown to have no negative effects, not making near-term investments does not help achieve our locally adopted plans and policy goals, like Envision Eugene.

Andrew also explained that in response to some stakeholder input, Return on Investment was measured for the proposed investment packages. However, Return on Investment is difficult to quantify in dollar amounts for this project. What we are able to calculate are measures, such as short-term construction jobs creation and federal funding that might be leveraged into the community as a result of the project.

Andrew referred the committee to a draft handout on the Investment Packages prepared for the Sounding Board's review to provide input on the content, messaging and overall clarity of the materials prior to sharing with the public.

Questions and comments from the Sounding Board included:

- The ridership decrease shown with Investment Package C with the Enhanced Corridor Alternative should be explained in a footnote or elsewhere to clarify why there would be less ridership than there is currently. *Andrew explained that it's unlikely LTD would move forward with an option that provides less frequent service for LCC students and faculty than currently offered, however, this option was modeled using a standard 15 minute frequency. Currently, frequency is more often than 15 minutes during school session and are timed based on classes. The project team agreed that additional information will be included to address this.*
- Additional information should be included to show why EmX is being considered only on River Road, and not Highway 99, with the exception of the all EmX option. *Andrew explained that it would result in too much service (a bus every 3 minutes) on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> since the Jefferson Westside Neighborhood is opposed to capital improvements on 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Andrew noted that the Highway 99 EC Alternative provides many of the benefits of EmX, including the proposed Trainsong Bridge, at a lower cost. The project team agreed information would be included to address this.*
- The black font/text in the dark blue boxes is hard to read. Try using a different color, or outlining in white.
- Highlight some key messages, especially the discussion of trade-offs comparing the various investment packages.
- Consider reducing the text/content explaining the alternatives. Use graphics/images as much as possible in lieu of narrative.
- Do not expand the handout; keep it at the existing size/page length.
- Create supplemental information, such as displays, handouts or presentation materials that provide more detail on each of the investment packages.
- Highlight the Return on Investment information and consider creating additional, supplemental information on this topic.
- Refer to the evaluation criteria in the infographic in the section on "How Packages Were Evaluated".
- Include information on how there will be less people driving if more people ride the bus.

- Include more information on vacant transit supported land that may be developed as a result of the project (Transit Oriented Development).
- How can we provide better service to people getting to work in the early hours of the morning and late and night when transit isn't operating? Ridesource is offered for some, could something similar be provided during off transit hours for people trying to get to work? *Andrew explained that another project underway by LTD, Transit Tomorrow was looking at how to make service changes that better balance the needs of the community as a whole, which may address hours of service.*

Jeanne asked the Sounding Board if they had any changes to the range of possible investment package options that should be conveyed to the Oversight Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee, City Council and the LTD Board. There were no suggested changes from the group.

#### **4. Next Steps – Andrew Martin (LTD) & Jeanne Lawson (JLA Public Involvement)**

Andrew reviewed the project timeline moving forward. He explained this committee would meet again in the summer of 2019 to hear the results of the community engagement efforts focused on the proposed investment package options. Following the current meeting with the Sounding Board, the project team will meet with the Oversight Committee, LTD Strategic Planning Committee, and jointly meet with the LTD Board and City Council to provide them with an update on the project and confirm or revise the range of possible investment package options. Following these meetings with decision-makers, there will be another round of community engagement, including a 30 day public comment period, open house and online engagement opportunity around March, 2019. Following the engagement activities, all the feedback will be compiled and the investment packages will be refined. This information will be shared with the Sounding Board, Oversight Committee, LTD Strategic Planning Committee, City Council and LTD Board in late Spring. It is anticipated that a decision will be reached on a preferred investment package by summer 2019.