

MEMORANDUM

To: MovingAhead Oversight Committee
From: Rob Inerfeld, Transportation Planning Manager, City of Eugene
 Andrew Martin, Development Planner, Lane Transit District
Date: November 22, 2021
Subject: MovingAhead Technical Team Recommendation on a Locally Preferred Alternative

Following the October 21, 2019 public hearing, MovingAhead project staff published a summary of the comments received and responses to those comments organized by topics raised in the comments. After the review and consideration of comments, staff worked together to incorporate feedback from the public into a technical team recommendation. People providing public comments found it challenging to provide input on the different investment packages and instead focused more on individual corridors. Recognizing that it is easier for people to understand approaches to individual corridors, staff focused the recommendation on a Locally Preferred Alternative for each corridor that incorporates technical work, community feedback throughout the process, and public comments received at the 2019 public hearing. The resulting recommendation does not use the concept of investment packages and instead recommends a mode and alignment for each corridor.

Staff recommend the following as the Locally Preferred Alternative:

Corridor	Mode
Highway 99	Enhanced Corridor
River Road	EmX
30th Avenue to Lane Community College (LCC) via downtown	No-Build [reconsider this corridor after other agency studies and projects are completed]
Coburg Road	Enhanced Corridor [requiring additional study and community engagement]
Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard via downtown	Enhanced Corridor

This memo outlines the process to arrive at a recommendation and the considerations that led to this recommendation.

Background

MovingAhead began in 2015 as a partnership between the City of Eugene and Lane Transit District (LTD). The purpose of the project has been to determine what transportation investments are needed on some of our most important streets to meet our community's long-term land use, transportation and sustainability goals. Initial community engagement in 2015 and 2016 led to conceptual designs that were analyzed for effectiveness in meeting the project's goals and potential impacts to the built and natural environment. This technical analysis was the basis for the publication of the MovingAhead Alternatives Analysis (AA) in 2018.

Following the publication of the AA, staff reached out to the community for feedback on the alternatives. The results of that public outreach showed that, in general, the community wanted transportation investments in all five corridors but not everyone agreed on which investments would be best. This feedback led to the development of a range of investment packages that offered different combinations of transit mode alternatives on each of the five corridors. The community was surveyed to determine what criteria were most important in determining the benefits of the packages and each of the packages was evaluated against these criteria. This approach was designed to help community members and decision makers to more easily review and comment on the options and eventually select a Locally Preferred Alternative. Staff conducted outreach on the refined investment packages in 2019 and then used that feedback to further refine the packages for a public hearing on October 21, 2019. The results of those public involvement processes and the public hearing were published as the *Investment Packages Alternatives Supplemental Refinement Report (2019)*, *Refined Investment Packages for Fall 2019 Public Hearing (2019)*, and *Comment Response Report Community Feedback Summer and Fall 2019 on Preferred Investment Package (2021)*, respectively.

The feedback received at the public hearing was largely consistent with feedback from prior rounds of public engagement. The most common areas of comment were:

- expressions of support for the project,
- expressions of opinions about public policy issues that are not NEPA issues,
- comments related to improving congestion and/or safety,
- comments related to improving fixed-route service instead of building MovingAhead,
- expressions of concerns about project costs,
- and assertions that the project is not consistent with other adopted plans.

Staff were preparing to release responses to the comments received at the 2019 public hearing when the addressing the coronavirus pandemic became the top community priority. MovingAhead was paused to allow the community to focus on the pandemic response.

Recommendation

Staff have developed a recommendation based on the project’s Purpose and Need and Goals and Objectives as adopted by the MovingAhead Oversight Committee and published in the *Alternatives Analysis* (2018). Staff considered technical information and feedback from public comment periods during 2018 and 2019.

Staff believe these investments best meet the Purpose and Need and Goals and Objectives and respond to community and committee feedback:

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Key considerations for each corridor include:

Enhanced Corridor on Highway 99

- The Enhanced Corridor alternative provides a 34% transit travel time improvement compared to the No Build alternative and increases ridership along the corridor.
- Safety investments in the Enhanced Corridor alternative are comparable to those in the EmX alternative.
- The Enhanced Corridor will increase transit frequency without increasing system-wide operations and maintenance costs.
- Capital costs are 43% lower for the Enhanced Corridor alternative compared to EmX.
- The Enhanced Corridor is projected to have fewer impacts than EmX to the community through property acquisition, parking space removal, street tree impacts, and other environmental factors.
- Feedback from the public was supportive of investments along the corridor, with safety being a key consideration.

EmX on River Road

- The EmX alternative provides the greatest travel time savings, with an improvement of 31% compared to No-Build. Travel time savings will be protected because 58% of the corridor will be comprised of priority/exclusive lanes.
- Ridership projections show an increase seven times greater for EmX than Enhanced Corridor, compared to No-Build.
- The EmX alternative contains much greater safety investment for people walking and biking.
- EmX has the potential to support much more redevelopment along the corridor.
- The River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods recently completed a neighborhood refinement planning process that proposes to use transit investment to improve livability and economic development.
- The River Road and Santa Clara neighborhoods also recently completed an FTA sponsored transit-oriented development study that assessed market feasibility for redevelopment and suggested code changes that can be adopted by the city. These code changes are intended to support redevelopment around transit stations.
- River Road EmX had the highest amount of support during public engagement. River Road No-Build had the lowest amount of support during public engagement.

No-Build on 30th Avenue to LCC

- Enhanced Corridor and EmX provided minimal travel time savings compared to No-Build.
- The Enhanced Corridor alternative would not provide an increase in ridership.
- Safety investments are being made or planned in the corridor through other projects such as Eugene's Central Eugene in Motion and Lane County's 30th Avenue Active Transportation Plan.
- Other studies have indicated that transit may be more appropriate on streets parallel to Amazon Parkway, rather than the alignment analyzed in the MovingAhead process.
- Any recommended investment option for this corridor should occur after the city, county, and LTD complete other studies and transportation investment projects.

Enhanced Corridor on Coburg Road

- The conceptual designs for the Enhanced Corridor alternative provide a 28% reduction in transit travel time. The EmX designs did not save additional transit travel time beyond that.
- The Enhanced Corridor alternative provides many of the safety benefits found in the EmX alternative.
- Compared to EmX, Enhanced Corridor requires significantly fewer impacts to the community, including to street trees, parking spaces, and property acquisition.
- During public engagement, EmX on Coburg Road was the most polarizing alternative with high levels of support and concerns. Enhanced Corridor had the highest average rating of alternatives on the corridor. The No-Build alternative had the lowest average rating for the corridor.
- The City of Eugene is interested in investigating design changes for all users on the portion of the corridor from Ferry Street Bridge to Oakway Road. This portion of the roadway does not currently work well for any mode and any changes that benefit automobiles may also provide some benefit to transit.
- Based on the challenging design conditions and polarizing public opinion, further process to refine designs and define the community vision on the corridor will be necessary regardless of which alternative is selected.

Enhanced Corridor on Martin Luther King Jr., Boulevard

- The Enhanced Corridor alternative provides a 15% transit travel time savings and an increase in ridership compared to the No-Build alternative.
- The City of Eugene has received grant funding through the state's All Roads Transportation Safety Grant program to make some of the safety investments along the corridor, irrespective of the outcome of the MovingAhead process.
- Taking a coordinated and flexible approach to funding could allow for an incremental implementation that achieves a high level of coordination and financial efficiency between the City of Eugene and LTD.