

Introduction

The letters, e-mails, voice messages, comment cards and testimony compiled in this document were submitted by individuals, business owners and representatives, agencies and organizations as part of the community participation program for the Downtown Amendment to the South Corridor Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Downtown Amendment) and the Draft Conceptual Design Report for the Portland Mall Revitalization Project (DCDR). The goal of this community participation process is to assess community opinions about the affirmation of the Locally Preferred Alternative for the downtown Portland segment of the South Corridor Project and to document the community discussion of urban design and mall function for the Portland Mall Revitalization Project.

The public comment document serves as an important component of a comprehensive outreach program that began with the development of the South/North Corridor in the early 1990s. Public comment related to the South/North Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the North Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement and the South Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement are documented in public comment reports for those projects. Public comments on the South Corridor scoping process, including the downtown Portland segment, were compiled in May 2000 and February 2003.

In an effort to provide opportunities for early and continuing involvement of the public, staff used a variety of outreach methods and materials. The public participation plans for all phases of the project detail a proactive involvement process to provide comprehensive and understandable information, timely public notice, full public access and involvement in key actions and decisions, outreach to communities that typically do not become involved in transportation project planning and the use of innovative and participatory outreach tools. Chapter 6 of the Downtown Amendment provides a detailed summary of the public involvement program.

Though the Portland Mall Revitalization Project and the Downtown Amendment processes resulted in separate documents that address varying levels of design and different technical analysis, the public involvement program for these projects was seamless and unified. Allowing the public to learn about and comment on both projects simultaneously simplified the process for community members and allowed better utilization of resources for the agencies and jurisdictions involved. As a result, comments were received on both the choices contained in the Downtown Amendment (mode, alignment, station location and terminus) and in the Draft Conceptual Design Report (station design, mall design and mall operations as well as mall revitalization and a mall management plan).

Background

The Draft Conceptual Design Report was distributed in July 2003. Public comments for the Draft Conceptual Design Report have been collected from July to the present. Notice

of Availability of the Downtown Amendment was published in the Federal Register on October 3, 2003, beginning the 45-day formal public comment period that concluded on November 17, 2003. This document summarizes the comments received from October 3 through November 17, 2003. A newspaper ad was published in *The Oregonian* on October 2, 2003 notifying the public of the availability of the Downtown Amendment, open houses and public hearing. Notice was mailed to property owners within 200 feet of the Portland Mall Alignment as well as others included on the Downtown Amendment mailing list. Open houses were held on October 7 at Portland State University, October 14 at the Portland Building and October 16 at the Port of Portland Building. A public hearing was held on October 21, 2003 at the Portland Building.

Throughout the public comment period, project staff met with neighborhood, community and business groups, individual businesses owners and citizens and local advisory groups. Maps, video simulations and PowerPoint presentations were used at many meetings. The Downtown Amendment and Draft Conceptual Design Report served as a source for technical information for many citizens. The Downtown Amendment and Draft Conceptual Design Report were available for review at all meetings and were distributed to all who requested it. Both documents were also available on the web.

Every effort has been made to include comments received at any meeting held during the public comment period as well as letters received before the start of the official public comment period. This report also includes a summary of comments received through the project hotline, e-mail, fax or letters. A total of 143 comments from 122 people are contained in this report.

Downtown Amendment Comment Summary

Comments Received at Public hearing: October 21, 2003

Thirty-one people testified and 80 attended the hearing. Most people testified in support of light rail on the mall. Six people testified in support of a subway option. All testimony regarding the terminus supported extending light rail to Portland State University.

Comments received at Community Open Houses in October 2003

More than 100 people attended the three open houses held in October. Twenty-eight people filled out comment cards. Fifteen comment cards included support for light rail on the mall and six opposed it. Four comment cards stated a preference for a subway option.

Comments received by e-mail and telephone

Forty-eight comments were received by e-mail and telephone. Nineteen comments were in support of light rail on the mall. Ten opposed light rail on the mall and five preferred a subway.

Written Comments and Correspondence

Twenty-five written comments were received. Eight comments supported light rail on the transit mall and eight opposed it. All comments with reference to the terminus option supported light rail to Portland State University.

Draft Conceptual Design Report Comment Summary

The Draft Conceptual Design Report was released in July 2003. It has been subject to significant technical analysis since July and the proposed design options for stations have been advanced. Much of the public comment received refers to the three design options originally specified in the July Draft Conceptual Design Report. It is likely that the final design options that the public will review in January 2004 will be further evolutions of the original options with the benefit of substantial technical analysis and public review. For this reason, comments have been summarized by design considerations and mall function rather than by specific design options that no longer are being considered in their original form.

Comments Received at Public hearing: October 21, 2003

Eighteen people testified about the auto lane with about half testifying in support of a through auto lane and half opposing it. Three people commented about preserving trees or planting new trees along the mall. One person commented that the tree canopy should be evaluated to balance trees with natural light on the mall.

Comments received at Community Open Houses in October 2003

Seventeen comment cards opposed autos on the mall. One comment card mentioned support of the auto lane on the mall. Three comments urged avoiding reduced sidewalk widths. Three felt trains crossing lanes would be dangerous to buses. Four people commented on the perceived danger to pedestrians of crossing travel lanes to reach the sidewalk. Two comments specified opposition to cut outs. Three comment cards requested that trees not be removed or severely trimmed. Four people commented on noise and the desire to move towards quieter buses on the mall.

Comments received by e-mail and telephone

Twelve comments opposed a through auto lane and three supported it. Four people commented on the importance of the trees on the mall and did not want to see them severely trimmed or removed entirely.

Written Comments and Correspondence

Two comments supported a through-auto lane and five opposed it. Four comments supported protecting trees and two comments suggested pruning existing trees and possibly removing some trees.