



Oregon

Department of Transportation
Region 1 Headquarters
123 NW Flanders Street
Portland, Oregon 97209
(503) 731.8200
FAX (503) 731.8531

January 11, 2019

No More Freeway Expansion Coalition

Subject: I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project – Environmental Assessment Public Comment Period and Accommodations for Public Hearing Event

Thank you for your ongoing participation in the I-5 Rose Quarter Improvement Project (Project). We are writing in response to your request for a 60-day extension to the public comment period for the Environmental Assessment (EA) and accommodations for a public hearing event.

We, along with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and in partnership with the City of Portland, are currently preparing the Project's comprehensive environmental study (Environmental Assessment). We have shifted the publication date to late February 2019 to complete the evaluation, ensure that we are presenting the information in a reader-friendly format, and to avoid holidays. Our goal is to publish a document that is easy to understand to facilitate community input on the environmental study. Technical reference for those readers who wish to pursue its contents in greater detail also will be provided. With the revised publication date, community members and stakeholders have additional time to prepare for the release of the Environmental Assessment.

We have engaged an extensive group of stakeholders over the years of Project development, including neighborhood, freight, bicycle, pedestrian, regional agencies and other community groups. Over the past two years, we have presented the Project at over 50 events and meetings, including 5 public events and forums, 4 community liaison meetings, and over 40 community and stakeholder presentations. The Project team also has visited over 60 local businesses in the Project area.

We will continue to provide opportunities for the public to engage and provide comments during the Environmental Assessment public review period and agree that an open house and public hearing are important opportunities for engagement. We are scheduling an in-person open house as well as a public hearing in March to provide an opportunity for oral and written testimony for the public record. We too are committed to maximizing accessibility for community members to participate and will ensure the event is accessible for families and has A/S/L interpretation. The A/S/L interpretation is a continuation of service we have provided at prior public events, including our first open house, community walk, and community forum in Fall 2017.

For those unable to attend in person, we also will host an online open house for the duration of the public comment period. Here, users can learn more about the project and submit written comment at their convenience. Public input also can be provided via email to info@I5RoseQuarter.org, via phone at 503-423-3760, or via mail to ODOT, c/o Megan Channell, 123 NW Flanders St, Portland, OR 97209.

We also have a robust plan for sharing the report findings, including multiple community presentations on top of the open houses and public hearing. The project team also will be made available during the public comment period to help answer any questions.

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Given the range of opportunities that will be provided for the public to engage in the Project and the environmental findings, we do not plan to extend the 30-day public comment period at this time. This is consistent with federal standards for an Environmental Assessment public review. We plan to publish the Environmental Assessment and start the public comment period to allow the interested readers to first see and review the information and then assess the time needed for review. Once the comment period begins, we will consider if an extension is necessary based on feedback received after publication of the document.

We look forward to continuing our community conversations and are pleased that so many organizations are aware of and are participating in the process. The No More Freeways Expansions Coalition has provided their input and concerns about the Project throughout this process and we will continue to listen to your concerns and address them along with the concerns of other stakeholders and participants. Thank you for your continued interest.

Sincerely,



Megan Channell
Major Projects Manager
Oregon Department of Transportation, Region 1

Cc:

Federal Highway Administration
Oregon Transportation Commission
Portland City Council
Metro Council
Chris Warner, Interim Director, Portland Bureau of Transportation
Joe Zehnder, Interim Director, Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability