

Meeting Minutes

Project: US 26: Outer Powell Transportation Safety Project (OPTSP)

Subject: Decision Committee Meeting #4

Date: Tuesday, December 08, 2015

Location: David Douglas High School - Library (1001 SE 135th Ave., Portland, OR, 97233)

Refreshments were served at 5:00 p.m.; meeting started at 5:40 p.m.

1. Group Introduction and Welcome Back – Andy Johnson welcomed the group, and led a round of introductions.
 - Decision Committee Members:
 - Representative Jessica Vega Pederson, Oregon State Legislature
 - Councilor Shirley Craddick, Metro Council
 - Neil McFarlane, TriMet General Manager
 - Rian Windsheimer, ODOT Region 1 Manager
 - Commissioner Steve Novick, City of Portland
 - Phil Ditzler, FHWA Division Administrator
 - Jack Polales, administrative delegate on behalf of Rep. Shemia Fagan
 - Paul Grosjean, Pleasant Valley Neighborhood Association Vice-Chair and Community Advisory Group Co-Chair
 - Project Team Members:
 - Mike Mason, ODOT Project Manager
 - Alan Snook, ODOT Major Projects Unit Manager
 - Matt Freitag, ODOT Roadway Engineer and Project Manager
 - Andy Johnson, HDR Project Manager
 - Cassie Davis, HDR Public Involvement Coordinator
 - Public/Other:
 - Ana Valderrama, Legislative Aide to Rep. Jessica Vega Pederson
 - Jeff Owen, TriMet and Outer Powell Agency Working Group
 - April Bertelsen, PBOT and Outer Powell Agency Working Group
 - Kwok Lee, area resident and business owner
2. Public Outreach – Mike and Cassie provided an update on public outreach activities performed since the last Decision Committee meeting in June.
 - Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the project team co-sponsored a Community Bike Ride with East Portland Action Plan (EPAP). The August 1st event started at Ed Benedict Park and was attended by several bike advocates, and community and agency representatives. Ride participants pedaled along Powell Blvd. from Ed Benedict Park at SE 104th Ave. to SE 174th Ave and back. The group stopped at several locations along the route to engage in conversation about existing conditions and potential improvements, including possible bike treatment options. The group had a lot of questions about the potential implications of the different kinds of treatments.
 - The project team hosted a booth at the Powellhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association's National Night Out event in conjunction with Portland Parks and Recreation's 'Movies in the Park' at Earl Boyles Park on August 1st. The booth featured information handouts about the project, an iPad station for online comments, and a television monitor with the project video. Participants stopped by the



booth to learn about the project and leave comments through the online interactive comment map. Sidewalks and pedestrian improvements were the most common themes heard.

- The project team conducted two rounds of bus canvassing in August during the early-morning commute times of 6:00-10:00 a.m. Transit riders were surveyed on questions about their experiences and observations about transit station areas and Powell Blvd. Survey questions focused on existing roadway conditions such as sidewalks, bike lanes, distance between bus stops, lighting and crosswalks. The categories with the most expressed interest for improvement were sidewalks and lighting.
- A late-summer open house was conducted on September 16th at Ron Russell Middle School. The event focused on various concept design options such as intersection configurations, bike facilities, and bus/bike treatments. The event featured large aerial maps of the corridor on display for participants to review and write comments. About 21 participants attended the event, several of whom were business and property owners who expressed concerns about potential property impacts.
- The project team staffed a booth at the Festival of Nations event hosted by the Division Midway Alliance at the Division Shopping Center on September 20th. The event was geared toward celebrating different ethnicities and cultural groups in Southeast Portland. Several hundred people attended the event, which featured a mix of different world foods, dance and music. The project booth had a large drawing pad with the question, “If you could change one thing about Powell Blvd., what would it be?” By the end of the day the number one response was to add sidewalks. The booth also featured a large world map where participants could indicate where they or their family were from by placing a pin in the map. Out of 25 pins in the map, 17 different countries were represented.
- The project team hosted a booth at Rosewood Initiative’s Community Care Day on October 17th. The event was intended to encourage under-represented, low-income, immigrant and minority groups to connect with local, state and governmental agencies. More than 100 participants visited the project booth, which featured the project video translated into five different languages (Russian, Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese and English). The project video was played in Spanish about 12-15 times throughout the event. The key issues expressed by participants included crosswalks and access to transit.
- The project video (originally in English) has been translated into four additional languages – Russian, Spanish, Cantonese and Vietnamese. The project team is working to distribute the translated videos through various community liaisons to help increase awareness.
- Phil Ditzler commended the team for having a good and diverse approach to outreach with this project.
- Rian Windsheimer asked if HDR had done translated videos before.
 - HDR responded that this is the first time translated videos have been performed out of the Oregon office.

3. Report Back and Concept Design Updates – Andy said that this portion of the meeting would review bike treatments, intersection treatments and bike/bus treatments. The project team will be further asking the committee for their support on the preferred treatment options.

- Bike treatments – the project team has engaged a wide variety of people to gain input on the various bike treatment options.
 - Buffered Bike Treatments

PROS	CONS
Bike lanes are at roadway grade and do not require any driveway reconstruction	Provides no physical separation between motor vehicles and bicyclists
Easy to maintain since the street sweeper has no change in grade and is not blocked by vertical elements	Buses will need to pull across the buffered bike lane to access curbside stops

Provides spatial separation between motor vehicles and bicycles	
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- The buffered bike lane treatment would include a 6-foot bike lane with a 2-foot buffer with striping.
- Andy said this is one of the preferred options that the project team will be requesting the committee to support for further consideration in the final design phase.

○ Raised Bike Lanes

PROS	CONS
The slight increase in height of the bike lane from traffic provides additional comfort to bicyclists with the potential to increase ridership	The design around transit stops will need to be considered with options to return the raised bike lane to road grade or to the full height of the curb
With the bike lane elevated above the roadway, it does not collect as much debris from the sweeping effect of passing vehicles and needs to be swept less often	The amount of inlets may significantly increase to reduce stormwater ponding in the path of car tires causing ice, hydroplaning, and splashing issues
Raised bike lanes visually reduce the width of the street to help with traffic calming	Having inlets in the wheel track has proven to be a maintenance issue for ODOT, creating wear for the concrete area surrounding the inlet
	Existing facilities have experienced conflicts with garbage bins being placed on the raised bike lane, posing an obstruction for bicyclists
	Education is needed to prevent motorists exiting driveways from stopping and blocking the bike lane while waiting for a gap to enter the travel way or to make a turn
	ODOT maintenance does not have the equipment to sweep or plow a raised mountable bike lane

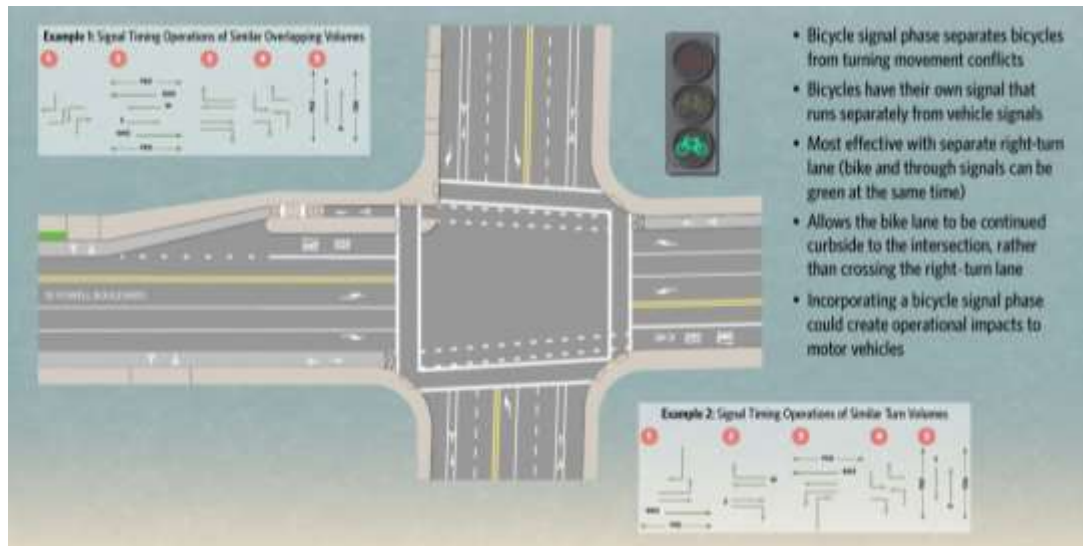
- One of the biggest concerns with this treatment is drainage – not that it can't be done, but it will take more consideration.
- ODOT does not currently have the proper maintenance equipment to service this treatment. PBOT has equipment that would work for this treatment; however it does require certain operability elements.
- Andy noted that this is one of the design concepts the team is requesting the committee to support for further consideration in final design.

○ Buffered Bike Lanes with Vertical Delineators

PROS	CONS
Buffered bike lanes with vertical delineators easily transition to regular bike lanes at driveways, intersections, transit stops, and right-turn lanes	The frequency of driveways on Outer Powell would result in numerous sections with few or no vertical delineators, limiting their effectiveness
Vertically delineated facilities provide added comfort to bicyclists with the potential to increase ridership	Some types of vertical delineators can limit the ability for bicyclists to exit the lane, to turn left, pass other bicyclists, or avoid

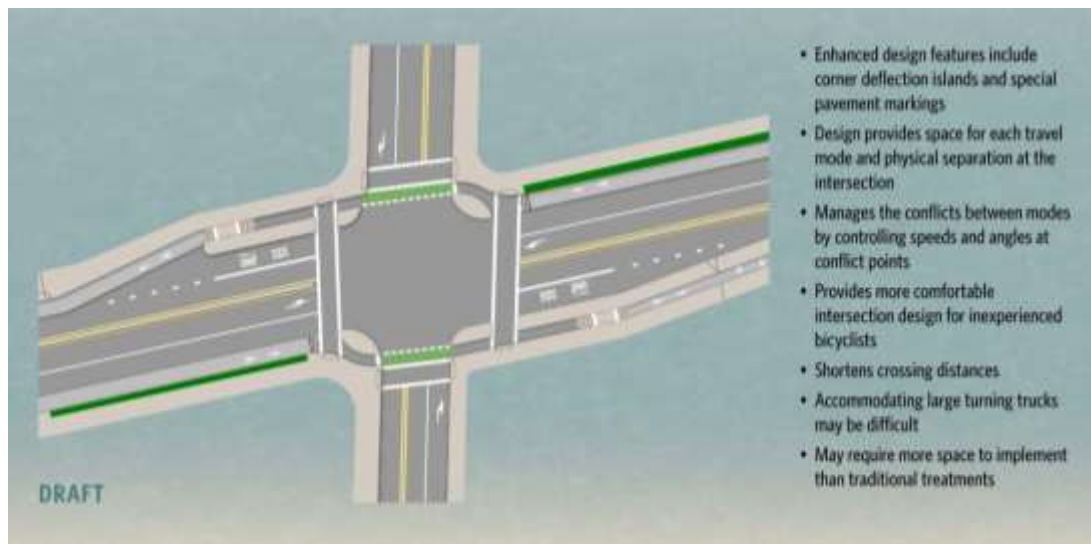
- a. Andy said that this option was brought up about two to three weeks ago and that the team has not been able to fully assess this option.
 - Decision Committee member asked if the project team had any sense for the cost difference of the different treatments.
 - a. Andy said they have a high-level idea of what the general cost would be but not specifically for each individual treatment. In general, the buffered bike treatment would have the least cost, the mountable raised treatment would be most expensive, and the curb separated option, they assume, would be somewhere in between.
 - Rian expressed concern for whether the curb is compatible with the speed of the corridor.
 - April asked if the turn lane has to be 14-feet.
 - a. Project team said that due to traffic moving 30-40 miles per hour in each direction that the width is set to allow for vehicles to transition in and out of the turn lane safely. It also allows adequate space for a raised island to offer a refuge to pedestrians, or lighting equipment at a crosswalk where a rapid flash beacon or other safety feature may be.
 - Commissioner Novick said that PBOT has an interest in reducing the speed limit from 35 mph to 30 mph.
 - a. Rep. Vega Pederson said she feels vehicles have still continued to speed regardless of the reductions in speed limits.
 - b. Commissioner Novick said the city anticipates installing unmanned speed cameras at particular intersections.
 - Neil said he thinks the curb separated option deserves further study to see if there are any advantages to offering this kind of separation for bikes, or whether it is too discontinuous to offer real advantages.
 - Rian said that while he thinks there are issues with this treatment and that they pose several concerns from a safety perspective that he is willing to support the notion to further investigate.
 - Andy asked the committee if they support moving the buffered and raised treatments to final design for consideration, and to further investigate the curb-separated option.
 - a. Decision: Committee made a unanimous decision to support buffered and raised treatments for final design consideration. The Committee also decided that the curb separated option proposed by PBOT should be assessed. (Jack Polales abstained)
- Intersection configurations – Andy provided an overview of the various intersection configurations that were investigated by the project team.

- Signalized intersection with right turn lanes and bike signal phasing.



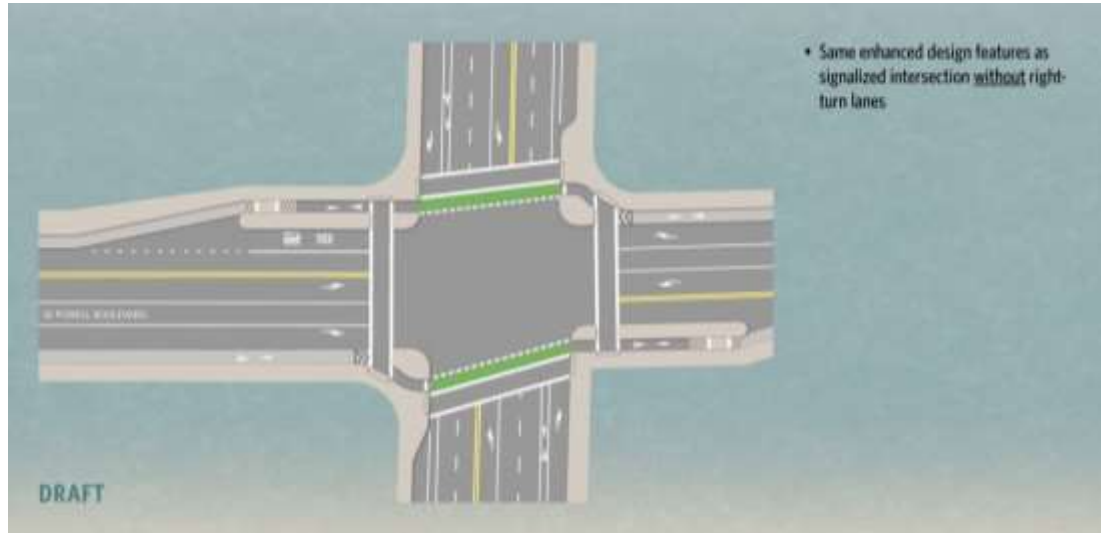
- Andy said there is a similar bike signal treatment at Broadway and I-5 that the city did and has received good responses.

- Signalized intersection without right turn-lanes and with enhanced design features



- This intersection treatment is similar to what some know as the 'Dutch' style intersection.

- Signalized intersection with right turn lanes and enhanced design features



- This intersection treatment is similar to what some know as the ‘Dutch’ style intersection.
- The project team is asking the committee to support the signalized intersection with bike signal phasing for further consideration in the final design.
- Andy said the Dutch style or enhanced intersection treatments have major cost and Right-of-Way implications and the team is not recommending them for final design. However, the team may consider some elements of these treatments at certain intersections.
- Andy said the CAG has supported the recommendation to consider the bike signal phasing option in final design, with potential consideration of elements in the Dutch style / enhanced treatments at certain locations, if appropriate.
- Decision Committee member asked if the freight turning movements were assessed with the Dutch style / enhanced treatment.
 - Andy said yes, after assessing turning movements of large trucks that they would not be able to make the turn without taking over oncoming traffic. This treatment would require much further outreach and would need to go to the freight mobility committee for further discussion. Andy further noted that there are many modes of travel through the corridor and the project team is trying to balance the trade-offs of several different kinds of treatments.
- Jeff Owen asked if the diverted curbs were mountable by trucks.
 - Project team said the curbs could be made to be mountable; however this would then compromise their intent for safety.
- Councilor Craddick said that she is a Gresham resident and that GPS software typically directs Gresham traffic down Powell. While she is supportive of active transportation, she also feels that this is an arterial that connects a lot of people via several modes of transportation and stresses the importance of getting all modes through the corridor efficiently and safely.
- Andy asked the committee if they support the recommendation to further assess the bike signal treatment for further consideration in final design. While the Dutch style / enhanced intersection treatment would not be further considered as a whole, some elements of this treatment may be considered in final design.
 - Decision: Committee unanimously agreed with the recommendation.
- Bike/bus treatments – Andy provided an overview of bicycle treatment concepts at bus stop locations

- Bus Pullout – requires buses approaching a stop to cross the bike lane to enter and exit a bus pullout. During boarding and alighting, bicyclists can continue to travel in the bike lane.
- In-Lane Stop – requires buses approaching a stop to merge into the bike lane. During boarding and alighting, bicyclists can continue to travel in the bike lane.
- Wrap-Around Bike Lane – bike lane between sidewalk and transit island; bike lane bends away from the travel lane to provide sufficient space for a refuge island that allows for safe boarding and alighting of buses. As bikes come around the transit island there would be a raised pedestrian crossing across the bike lane (from sidewalk to transit island) with visual queues that let pedestrians know of potential oncoming bikes.



- CAG recommended the wrap-around bike lane treatment be further assessed to see if it works at certain locations.
- Phil asked if the wrap-around bike lane treatment was intended to be used at bus pullouts only.
 - a. Andy said it would be preferred to have the bike/bus wrap-around treatment at bus pullouts.
- Neil said there has been issues with bus and bike conflicts and that the bike wrap-around option offers a large benefit to bus drivers and bicyclists by providing ease of entry and exit for the bus operators and more efficient output of passengers on the sidewalk, while minimizing bike and bus conflicts.
- Phil asked if the bike wrap-around option is state-of-the-art or if it has been done in other places.
 - a. Jeff Owen said it had been done in different areas but is relatively new to Portland.
- Councilor Craddick asked how many opportunities along the corridor would be eligible for this treatment.
 - a. Andy said it is unknown at this time, but that the next phase of the project will be assessing if and where this treatment would be beneficial.
- Councilor Craddick asked if the bike signal treatment would be eligible at any other intersections besides SE 122nd.



- Rep. Vega Pederson said that the eastbound bus stop east of SE 122nd holds up a lot of traffic and that having bus pull outs at these types of high frequency stops is very important.
 - Andy asked the committee to support the recommendation to carry the bike wrap-around treatment forward to final design for further consideration.
 - Decision: Committee unanimously supported the recommendation.
- 4. Community Advisory Group Update – Paul provided a list of items the CAG asked to be emphasized to the Decision Committee.
 - Interest in minimizing transit and vehicle conflicts by having more bus pullouts so vehicles are not stalled behind buses for long periods of timing causing traffic to back up. Paul stressed his interest in having more bus pull outs.
 - Neil said that bus pullouts aren't always possible and even when they are they're not always the best situation because bus operators have difficulty getting back into the moving traffic. TriMet has to consider what the right treatment is for lower volume stops. He further noted that it is important to assess the trade offs amongst drivers and transit when deciding on treatment.
 - The committee expressed concern over several old trees that are close to the corridor and asked what the impacts would be. Conversely, there is some concern for trees causing safety issues due to visual impairments.
 - North-South traffic at SE 136th and Powell intersection needs to be looked at for improved capacity. This intersection serves as a major hub that connects Powell to Foster and the traffic has increased dramatically in recent years.
 - The CAG would like to urge the decision committee to keep this project moving forward as quickly as possible. People have waited too long already to see these improvements.
- 5. Public Comment – Andy opened the room for public comment.
 - No comments.
- 6. Environmental Process Update – Andy provided an overview of the environmental documentation to date.
 - Overview of environmental review terminology
 - Environmental Assessment (EA) – This is a concise public document used to assist in determining impacts of a transportation project proposal.
 - Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) – This is a documented finding of no significant impacts on the environment after analysis of a project is completed through an EA process.
 - Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – This may be prepared when an EA identifies significant impacts affecting the quality of the human environment as a result of the project.
 - Categorical Exclusion (CatEx) – This category of action indicates the project components individually or cumulatively do not have a significant effect on the human environment and therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor environmental impact statement is required.
 - The project team assessed the corridor under the assumption that an EA would be concluded. If an EA is determine than there would be another year added to the environmental phase to go into this investigation, and would delay the final design process. However, no significant impacts have been concluded to date. If the project receives a CatEx than it would proceed to the design phase of the funded segment (Powell Boulevard from SE 122nd to SE 136th).



- Rian commended the Community Advisory Group, residents and other organizations and representatives for providing feedback on the project and for weighing in on various tradeoffs; and for whose support has helped the project move forward more quickly.
- Andy provided an overview of the technical report findings. Project team has not found any impacts that rise to the level of significant. The project team has done a good job laying out the design to best avoid impacts. The table below shows the technical areas reviewed and the degree of impact according to ODOT's preliminary findings.

Potential Impacts	Minor / No Impacts
Vegetation	Biology/Wetlands
Visual	Air Quality
Noise	Utilities
Right of Way	Section 4(f)
Water Resources/Quality	Section 6(f)
Socio-Economics/ Environmental Justice	Land Use
Parks and Recreation	Geology
Cultural/Historic	Hazardous Materials

- Councilor Craddick asked if the water main line that runs down Powell Boulevard will be assessed for replacement as a part of this project or if it will be impacted by this project.
 - Andy said it is not part of this project and measures would be taken during final design to make sure that it is not impacted by this project. Portland Water Bureau is currently assessing whether there would need to be any coordination with future projects in the area.
- Vegetation – Andy said there will be some impacts to vegetation, but project team has worked to minimize impacts as much as possible; roadway designers made some shifts to help avoid key pockets of trees.

Potential Impacts
Short Term: Tree removal in some locations
Long Term: Tree removal may have a minor impact on songbirds and other species that visit local trees
Cumulative: Combined impacts of the proposed project and other future projects are not expected to result in adverse cumulative impacts to natural elements

- Visual – Andy said that things will look visually different along Powell with the overall roadway improvements. However many of the changes with this design will improve the visual components, and something like the sweeping view of Mt. Hood would want to be preserved.

Potential Impacts
Short Term: Construction vehicles and equipment, staging areas, temporary fencing, removal of existing roadway sections, vegetation/trees, and traffic congestion
Long Term: Widening and striping, new turn lanes, concrete sidewalks and medians, new landscaping, signage, and stormwater planters, defined driveways. Most view changes were found to have low to moderate impacts and several changes were assessed to be neutral or beneficial

Cumulative: Reasonably foreseeable future actions are not expected to greatly change the visual quality of the project area, thus no cumulative impacts are expected on visual quality

- Noise – Andy said there are a few locations where the noise decibel will increase as a result of the project, but no more than five decibels. Project team will talk to property owners about the noise changes and their interest in potential noise walls. However, overall there are minimal noise level changes and no significant impacts.

Potential Impacts

Short Term: Noise from construction activities would range from 70 to 100 dBA at 50 feet and may be a temporary nuisance to adjacent properties

Long Term: Noise level exceedances would occur as a result of extending the highway footprint closer to existing land uses and potential noise receptors. Up to 295 properties may experience exceedances of existing standards, however, noise levels are predicted to increase by no more than 5 dBA above existing sound levels as a result of changes in the current highway alignment

Cumulative: Noise levels for the Build Alternative were predicted using past, present, and reasonably foreseeable development actions in the region.
 No-Build Alternative: 47 to 71 dBA
 Build Alternative: 47 to 72 dBA

- Right-of-Way (ROW) – Andy said that while there are several strips of land that would be taken for the project, in total, long term acquisitions would only amount to approximately 3 percent of total taxable land. There are a few potential relocations, but no full-site acquisitions are required.

Potential Impacts

Short Term: Costs for temporary easements and construction expenses would occur. Total estimated short-term costs would be approximately \$5.3M

Long Term: Acquire small amounts from up to 322 parcels. Estimated 5.6 acres of permanent acquisitions and 17.3 acres for temporary acquisitions. Two residential and three business displacements/relocations. About 3 percent of the total taxable land would be acquired.

Cumulative: None

- Rian noted that relocations include moving and supporting the property owner through the whole relocation process, not just payment for their land.
- Water Resources/Quality – Andy said that it is anticipated that the majority of the corridor will have stormwater improvements. There are still logistics to be worked out with the Underground Injection Control units, but overall impacts to water quality and treatment will improve compared to what exists today.

Potential Impacts

Short Term: No streams, water bodies or wetlands are present in the area

Long Term: Proposed water treatment facilities would have a positive impact on water quality by capturing and treating highway runoff that currently collects along the highway during rain events

Cumulative: Combined impacts of the proposed project and other future projects are not expected to result in adverse cumulative impacts to natural elements

- Socio Economics / EJ – Andy said no class is being disproportionately impacted as a result of the project.

Potential Impacts
Short Term: Temporary increases in dust, noise, equipment, traffic disruptions, and delays could affect individuals in the project area.
Long Term: No properties would become isolated and no negative impacts on households or income are expected to result. One public service use and one minority owned business would be affected by right-of-way acquisition. About 3 percent of the total taxable land would be acquired.
Cumulative: Potential cumulative impacts are expected to be beneficial as the proposed improvements would be combined with other minor improvement projects to enhance safety and travel along the highway.

- Parks and Recreation – Andy said there would be minimal impacts to the park, and that the impacts would improve bike, pedestrian and transit safety without affecting recreational uses.

Potential Impacts
Short Term: Construction activities would be located to avoid parks and access to them, however, temporary use of a portion of Ed Benedict Park and/or Powell Butte Nature Park may be required during construction
Long Term: Minimal park area would be converted for transportation use from Ed Benedict Park, and no recreation uses would be affected
Cumulative: Would improve bicycle, pedestrian, and transit safety and accessibility to parks and recreation facilities

- Andy said that according to ODOT preliminary findings, the environmental technical reports seem to suggest that the project should soon be transitioning to the design phase of the funded segment. The project team is looking to wrap up all technical reports within the next couple months.

7. Transition into Design Process – Mike shared that there have been six Agency Working Group meetings, six Community Advisory Group meetings, and now four Decision Committee meetings throughout the environmental and planning process. These committees have helped inform and offer feedback to the project team throughout preliminary design, and helped generate support and momentum for getting funding. If the review by FHWA of the environmental documentation concludes that there are no likely significant impacts, then the project team can begin the design for the funded segment. Once design work begins for the funded segment, from SE 122nd to SE 136th, the project team will want to have final design elements concluded around summer 2016 in order to keep things moving forward quickly. Due to the number of strips that need to be negotiated as part of the ROW process, it is anticipated that the final design phase will take approximately two years; construction is anticipated to begin in 2019 and last two years.

- Rep. Vega Pederson asked if a transportation package gets passed how future funding might affect the design. For example, assuming more funding comes through in 2017, after the design is already well underway, what would it take to expand the project to include additionally funded segments.
- Rian noted that it might be worthwhile to consider designing for the entirety of the corridor as opposed to funded segment by funded segment. And that it could offer a cost benefit by designing the whole corridor at once.
- Councilor Craddick noted that if the project team designs for a larger area there would need to be some level of confidence that funding would in fact come through.
 - Rian said possibly 30 percent design for the whole corridor up front would be a better way to approach this idea.
 - Mike said the project team was not currently planning on taking this approach but would investigate the pros and cons of full corridor design.



- Mike thanked the Decision Committee for their participation and support throughout the environmental and planning phase and noted that this is the last anticipated Decision Committee meeting for the project. Decisions moving forward will be made by the ODOT project team with consideration of the supported recommendations received from the committees and stakeholder involvement. He further asked how the committee would like to be informed of project updates moving forward.
 - Commissioner Novick said he would feel more comfortable meeting a couple more times before 30 percent design.
 - Neil said he would expect to continue receiving email notifications.
 - Councilor Craddick said she would like to be kept informed about what happens with the facility concept options discussed and would be interested in committee briefings.
 - Andy noted that the Community Advisory Group will be continuing to meet.
 - Mike said that the project team would consider the interests of the committee members, their schedules and the project team's scope of work and decide on a briefing strategy. The goal is to provide regular updates to Decision Committee members.
8. Final Thoughts – Andy asked the committee if they had any concluding remarks.
- Rep. Vega Pederson said it is inspiring to see this project moving forward and that the community will be able to see something built in the next five years.
 - Councilor Craddick noted that with Rep. Vega Pederson's transition out of the state legislative body that she is sad to see one less advocate for this project in the state legislature, and would like to see continued support from any newcomers.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.