



Memorandum

Date: January 28, 2015

To: 170th Ave / Merlo Road Conceptual Design Plan Project Advisory Committee

From: Steve Szigethy, Principal Transportation Planner

RE: Cumulative Summary of Public Comments

Since October 2014, the 170th/Merlo Conceptual Design Plan project team has received 152 public comments through comment cards, flip chart notes, Post-It notes adhered to the conceptual design layout and the project website. This is in addition to more specific feedback on design choices gleaned through the dot exercises at the November open house.

Staff categorized public comments and counted the frequency of particular topics. The following memo summarizes these comments in descending order of frequency of a particular topic. (Note: Certain comments were flagged as pertaining to multiple topics). Post-It note comments are repeated at the end of the memo, organized geographically.

Turning / Traffic Signals (31 comments)

The most commonly heard comments were related to difficult vehicle turning movements and a desire for traffic signals or turn lanes at particular locations. People noted that left turns onto 170th Avenue or Merlo Road from side streets are particularly difficult at Johnson Street, Vendla Park Drive, Augusta Lane, Berkeley Lane, Marty Lane and Merlo Drive. The lack of a left turn lane from southbound 170th to eastbound Merlo was mentioned multiple times. Others wanted better signal timing, including better interaction of county and ODOT signals at TV Highway, Alexander and Blanton.

Bikeways (29 comments)

At least 21 people commented on the need for bike lanes and/or stated support for the cycle track concept. An additional eight comments shared concern about cycle tracks. This included initial concern about the two-way cycle track concept (which was ultimately removed from consideration after the November open house), as well lingering concerns about maintaining visibility between bikes and cars through the physical buffer, and the reduced opportunity for cyclists to leave the bike lane to merge into traffic to make left turns.

Roundabout (25 comments)

The proposal for a roundabout at 170th and Merlo generated 13 comments in support and 12 comments in opposition. This matches observations from project staff who heard a near equal amount of support and opposition to the roundabout during conversations with attendees at the January open house. Supporters cited the ability of roundabouts to slow traffic to a safe speed without impeding overall traffic flow. In conversation, many roundabout supporters mentioned roundabouts they have used elsewhere in Washington County, in other states and in Europe. Those that did not like the roundabout mentioned the amount of space it would require, potential difficulties for pedestrians and bicyclists navigating the roundabout, and the elimination of gaps in traffic that currently help people turn onto 170th and Merlo at nearby driveways and local streets.

Road Widening (21 comments)

The proposed addition of automobile lanes on 170th and Merlo generated 12 comments in support and nine comments questioning the need for more lanes. Those in support cited increasing congestion, new development, a desire for more efficient travel through the corridor, and the lack of a north-south freeway putting demands on the arterial system. A subset of people asked why 170th Avenue would not be widened north to Baseline Road or even Cornell Road. Comments against widening included a concern that 170th Avenue would become “another Murray or 185th” with high speeds and traffic, as well as concerns about right-of-way impacts. Several people suggested that 2/3 lanes could be maintained if improvements are made at the intersections. Residents who attended from the Cooper Mountain area worried that widening 170th would send more traffic up and over the mountain.

Sidewalks (15 comments)

Participants mentioned the obvious lack of sidewalks along 170th Avenue. People pointed out the need for safe pedestrian facilities along Tualatin Hills Nature Park and for access to Beaver Acres Elementary School and bus service along TV Highway. Several people recommended keeping pedestrians and bicyclists separated, not mixed together in a multi-use path. Others wanted to be sure that sidewalks would be built on both sides of the street.

Circulation / Access / Connectivity (14 comments)

Staff received a number of specific comments related to circulation, park access, local street access and pedestrian connectivity. Several had complaints on the practice of school buses using Vendla Park Drive as a de facto turnaround, with one person suggesting the school build an on-site turnaround. Several residents of Vendla Park Drive wanted to see the street become a cul-de-sac with pedestrian-only access at 170th Avenue, with car traffic directed to a new signal at Augusta Lane. However, other residents of the same street disagreed with this idea. Other comments included support for the Augusta Lane Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge, and a suggestion to add a new parking lot for the nature park on the east side of 170th Avenue.

Crossings (13 comments)

People mentioned the need to safely cross 170th Avenue, particularly to access Tualatin Hills Nature Park at Johnson Street and Vendla Park Drive. Several people supported a pedestrian undercrossing of 170th Avenue when the new bridge over Beaverton Creek is built. Other crossing needs were identified at Elmonica MAX station and Marty Lane.

Property Impacts (12 comments)

Residents are understandably concerned about the property impacts that an expanded roadway would cause. However, these concerns are bifurcated into those who wish to see minimal impacts to the nature park (including members of the Friends of Tualatin Hills Nature Park), and those who want no residential impacts on the west side of 170th and prefer expanding into the nature park. Others did not state a preference, but simply want the footprint of the roadway to be minimized.

Other Repeated Comments

Other comments that were expressed by multiple people include the following:

- Support for rebuilding the obsolete 170th Avenue bridge over Beaverton Creek (6 comments)
- Support for extending bus service south on Merlo and 170th, and for improved pedestrian access to existing MAX and bus service (6 comments)
- Concerns about wildlife movement across 170th Avenue and suggestions to aid this movement to support healthy habitat and reduce animal-vehicle crashes (6 comments)
- Requests to bury electric utility lines (4 comments)
- Support for the addition of street lighting (3 comments)

Post-It Note Comments

The following comments were written and adhered to the conceptual design print-out at the January open house. These comments are integrated into the summary above, but are listed below by geography to get a sense of where people have concerns. Comments are provided verbatim and may include spelling errors or unclear handwriting.

Baseline Rd:

- Need bike lane in this section to fill in the gap
- "NIX" this. There are sidewalks.
- 5 lanes from Cornell to 175th, 175th to Roy Rogers then on to I-5

Marty Ln

- Need a stop light at 170th & Marty Ln. (I agree) (3rd)

170th/Merlo

- Keep cyclists in the road or next to it! No roundabouts!
- No roundabout!
 - o I have concerns too.
 - o Yes
- I think a traffic light is fine. Bike lane then needs sensors for it.
- Roundabout slows flows and forces attentive driving. Europe has WAY less accidents with them and with the school, as a high school student, I like it 😊
- It's long since time to use roundabouts. Very much in favor, but be sensitive to non-auto users needing to move in all directions.
- Roundabout may slow traffic too much. Standard lights should work better

Augusta Ln

- Traffic signal needed at Augusta Ln? Safety concerns
- As a parent of Beaver acres! Safety (I agree) - needs a stop light at Augusta & 170th. (Yes!)
- Side notes: YES to Augusta Ln Bridge connection
- Bus turn around to go back to out on Augusta & 170th.
- Consider parking for Woods in this area, not across the street. (yes!)

Vendla Park Ln

- Can Vendla be closed?
- School buses queue at the Vendla Intersection in the morning and evening (9 buses)
- Put a cul-de-sac and block this off. (yes)
- I like this idea (the cul-de-sac)
- Sound barrier for corner properties on Vendla Park Ln.
- Concerned about water draining from new road to the corner property on Vendla Park Ln.
- Why not move the road 6-10' west [east?] to create more space for homes on the west side of 170th? Save trees or homes?

Johnson St

- Light? People have been hit
- Please consider "pow-wow" with Hon Gottschalks Urban Design class for an educational experience at ACMA.

Heritage Ct

- Bike buffer should move from pouter to paint for egress/ingress to side street.

TV Highway

- Direct traffic onto TV HWY or Farmington and NOT on 170th/175th over Cooper Mountain.