

I-5 Boone Bridge Replacement Project Engaging the Community - Fall 2024 Outreach and Comment Summary

Key #21541

December 4, 2024

1. Executive Summary

The objective of this round of outreach for the I-5 Boone Bridge Replacement Project was to share the draft findings from the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) phase of the project and gather input from the community on the draft findings. The project team also shared information about the Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) process and collected input on the CFEC potential alternative investments.

Methods of engagement included an in-person and online open house, with both offering comment forms in English and Spanish asking about the project options being studied. Additionally, there were opportunities to provide comments via letters and emails. Almost 200 people provided feedback during this round of outreach by attending the open house, or by submitting emails, letters or comment forms. Comments heard at the in-person open house came mostly from local community members and comments collected online came mostly from ZIP codes outside of the Wilsonville area and/or people who used the current bridge infrequently.

Following this round of outreach, the project team will review comments and agency input and incorporate relevant feedback into the PEL documentation, which will be finalized and shared on the project website. The input relevant to CFEC will be included in CFEC documentation. After completing the PEL phase, the project website will be updated with the outcomes, and an email will be sent to the project distribution list to inform the public of next steps. There will be future opportunities for involvement during the NEPA environmental phase when funding for the project becomes available. During NEPA, additional outreach and communication strategies will be implemented with the goal of increased involvement of underrepresented demographic groups.

2. Notification

Multiple communication channels promoted engagement opportunities during this phase. The in-person and online open houses were promoted on the project website in English and Spanish as well as through:

- Emails to the project mailing list
- Community engagement liaisons mentioning the open houses during July focus groups with community members from underrepresented groups and encouraging participants to attend, including during the focus group held in English on July 17 and in Spanish on July 19

- Project staff handing out informational flyers in English and Spanish at local community events in August, including the Charbonneau Newcomers Event on August 14 and the Canby Farmers Market on August 31
- Articles in the August and September editions of *The Boones Ferry Messenger*
- An article in the September edition of ODOT's Urban Mobility Strategy newsletter
- An article and an ad in the September edition of *The Charbonneau Villager*
- An article in the *Wilsonville Spokesman*

The City of Wilsonville promoted the open houses on their website and community calendar. There were also social media posts by others that promoted the open houses.

3. In-Person Open House

The in-person open house was held at Wilsonville City Hall, on Wed., Sept. 18, 2024, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Accommodations were provided, including accessible parking and a Spanish interpreter. About 60 people attended the open house, most of whom were from the immediate Wilsonville area. Many were seniors. Project team members staffed informational stations with display boards containing project information that were set up around the room. People were invited to visit the stations and talk with project staff. A 25-minute PowerPoint presentation began at 6 p.m. and was followed by approximately 25 minutes of a group Q&A. Many people stayed after the Q&A and visited the stations. The Wilsonville mayor and several city council members were in attendance, as well as candidates for local offices.

3.1 What We Heard

Some attendees expressed support for adding a southbound auxiliary lane on I-5 across the Boone Bridge because of the congestion relief it would provide, while others raised concerns about traffic congestion in the area today. Some attendees suggested that additional through lanes be added to accommodate current and future traffic demand. Feedback on the pedestrian/bike path options varied with some supporting the French Prairie Bridge option and others supporting the separated pedestrian/bike connection on the I-5 Boone Bridge. Concerns about the French Prairie Bridge option included potential high costs, as well as potential impacts to the environment, property, parking and traffic. Concerns about the I-5 Boone Bridge pedestrian/bike option focused on it providing a potentially less appealing experience for users. During the Q&A, some participants raised concerns regarding the project's funding deficit and how the pedestrian/bike connection would interact with I-5 on- and off-ramps. Some participants expressed concerns that the French Prairie Bridge option would be substantially more costly than placing the pedestrian/bike connection on the I-5 Boone Bridge. Several participants voiced support for adding a southbound auxiliary lane and/or additional through lanes to I-5.

4. Online Open House and Comment Form

The online open house was available as a link on the project homepage from Sept. 11 – 25. The online open house received 97 visits, 107 views and 92 unique visitors. Attendees of both the in-person and online open houses were encouraged to complete the comment form online. In addition, the project team provided paper copies of the comment form at the in-person open house. The project team received 181 completed comment forms, including seven paper comment forms received at the in-person open house,

two of which were in Spanish. Many people completed the online comment form without visiting the in-person or online open house.

The comment form had a total of ten questions, with seven about the project, one asking for the participant's ZIP code and two optional questions asking for the participant's race and age, respectively. Six of the questions about the project were multiple choice and one was open-ended. The open-ended question provided the opportunity for participants to give feedback that may not have been captured in their responses to the other questions. The ZIP codes were collected to track where participants live, and the race and age information was used to help the project team better understand the demographics of the respondents. A copy of the comment form is included in Appendix 1.

4.1 Feedback

4.1.1 Location

The majority of comment form responses were from ZIP codes outside the project vicinity (149 responses or 82%). Most responses were from Portland ZIP codes (114 responses or 62%). 31 responses (17%) were from ZIP codes local to the project area (27 responses from the Wilsonville 97070 ZIP code and 4 responses from the 97002 Butteville/Aurora ZIP code). Other responses were from other areas of Oregon including Beaverton or Hillsboro (7 responses), Tigard or Tualatin (7 responses), Salem (5 responses), Corvallis (3 responses), Lake Oswego or Oak Grove (3 responses), Newberg or McMinnville (2 responses), Happy Valley (2 responses), Eugene (2 responses) and Oregon City (1 response). In addition, 3 responses were from State of Washington ZIP codes.

4.1.2 Demographics

Of the 181 people who responded, 147 opted to provide information about their age. Almost 60% were between the ages of 35 and 64, 20% were between the ages of 18 and 34, 8% were 65 or over and 2% were under 18 years of age. 132 respondents opted to provide information about their race. About 88% were white, 10% were Hispanic or Latino, 6% were Asian and 4% were Black or African American. One respondent was American Indian or Alaska Native and two respondents were of another race not listed. The project team conducted other outreach activities to hear from some groups that are underrepresented in the comment form responses.

4.1.3 Frequency of Use of the Current I-5 Boone Bridge

The majority of respondents did not frequently use the existing I-5 Boone Bridge. Approximately 64% used the bridge a few times per month or less, including about 19% who rarely or never used the bridge. About 35% used the bridge a few times per week or more.

4.2 What we heard

4.2.1 Infrequent Users

The following are takeaways from the 117 respondents who do not frequently use the bridge:

- **Primary Mode of Travel:** Infrequent users were most likely to carpool with others (41%) or drive alone (35%).
- **Alternative Improvements:** Most respondents (80%) said that they would use a safer connection for people walking and biking, improved or increased bus service and a new or improved park and ride. 9% said none of these options would work for them.
- **Auxiliary Lane Benefits:** About 8% of respondents thought a new auxiliary lane would benefit them, 85% did not think a new auxiliary lane is needed and 5% thought a new auxiliary lane would not affect them.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection Preference:** About 28% of respondents preferred the French Prairie Bridge option, 4% preferred having the new connection on the new I-5 Boone Bridge structure, 32% were okay with either option and fewer than 1% did not think a new bicycle/pedestrian connection is important.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection Use:** The most likely reasons respondents would use a new pedestrian and bicycle connection is for recreational use or commuting to work or school. 55% stated they would use it for recreation occasionally and 26% would use it for recreation often. 62% would use it for commuting occasionally and 9% would use it for commuting often.
- **Additional Comments:** 57 respondents who were infrequent users of the current I-5 Boone Bridge opted to share additional thoughts with the project team. Themes of the responses included:
 - Many of the comments expressed opposition to the addition of an auxiliary lane on I-5, with some citing concerns about induced traffic demand and potential negative environmental impacts.
 - Comments included suggestions to invest in transit, including commuter rail expansions and improved or increased bus service.
 - Comments expressed support for investing in active transportation, including support for the French Prairie Bridge pedestrian and bicycle connection option. Some comments provided reasons they prefer the French Prairie Bridge option including it would be more scenic, be quieter, have better air quality, be more comfortable and provide better access for emergency vehicles. Some comments expressed that the local community and people who don't use cars deserve a comfortable way to cross the river.
 - Three comments suggested implementing tolling to manage traffic demand before adding an auxiliary lane.

4.2.2 Frequent Users

The following are takeaways from the 64 respondents who frequently used the bridge:

- **Primary Mode of Travel:** Frequent users were most likely to drive alone (61%), take the bus (17%) or carpool with others (15%).
- **Alternative Improvements:** Most respondents said that they would use a safer connection for people walking and biking (100%), improved or increased bus service (81%), and a new or improved park and ride (81%). 5% said none of these options would work for them.
- **Auxiliary Lane Benefits:** About 20% of respondents thought a new auxiliary lane would benefit them, 80% did not think a new auxiliary lane is needed and one respondent thought a new auxiliary lane would not affect them.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection Preference:** About 55% of respondents preferred the French Prairie Bridge option, 19% preferred having the new connection on the new I-5 Boone Bridge structure, 23% were okay with either option and less than 3% did not think a connection is important.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Connection Use:** The most likely reasons these respondents would use a new pedestrian and bicycle connection is for recreational use or commuting to work or school. 32% stated they would use it for recreation occasionally and 48% would use it for recreation often. 64% would use it for commuting occasionally and 34% would use it for commuting often.
- **Additional Comments:** 34 respondents who were frequent users of the current I-5 Boone Bridge opted to share additional thoughts with the project team. Themes of the responses included:
 - Many commentors were against adding lanes on I-5, with some expressing skepticism that the auxiliary lane will address traffic congestion and concerns about potential negative environmental impacts.
 - Some comments highlighted the need for transportation options that reduce car dependence and provide safe, reliable alternatives for non-drivers, such as active transportation and transit.
 - Some comments expressed support for the French Prairie Bridge option, with some comments stating reasons for it. Reasons given included it would provide a more comfortable user experience, more people would want to use it, it would bring tourism and it could help provide access for first responders during emergencies.

5. Comment Form Results

Figure 1: Comment Form Question 1 Results

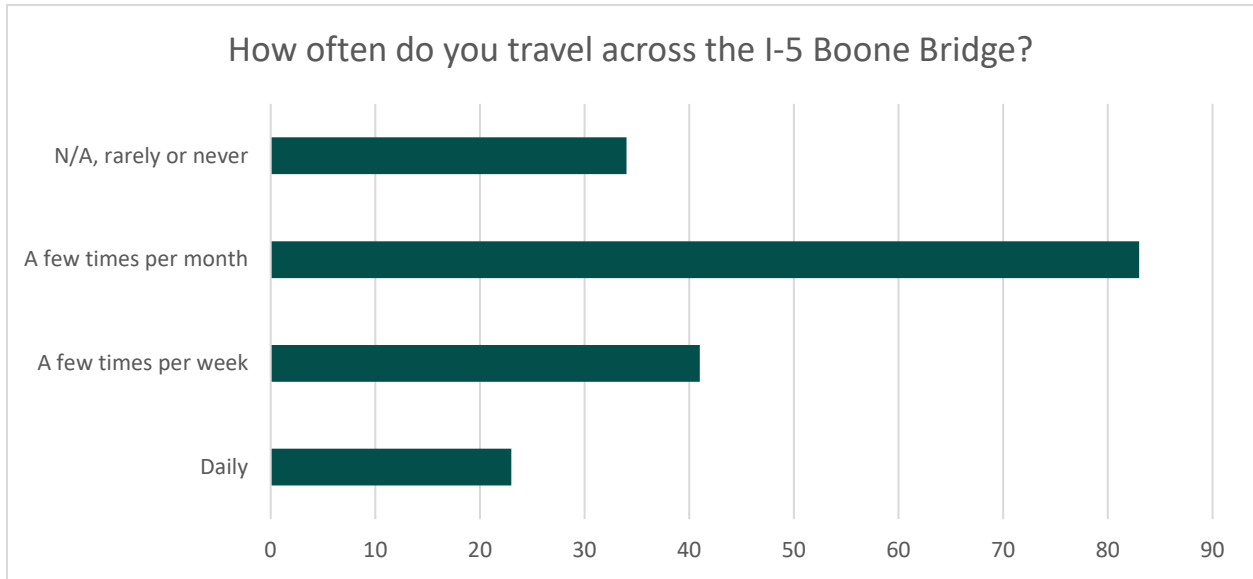


Figure 2: Comment Form Question 2 Results

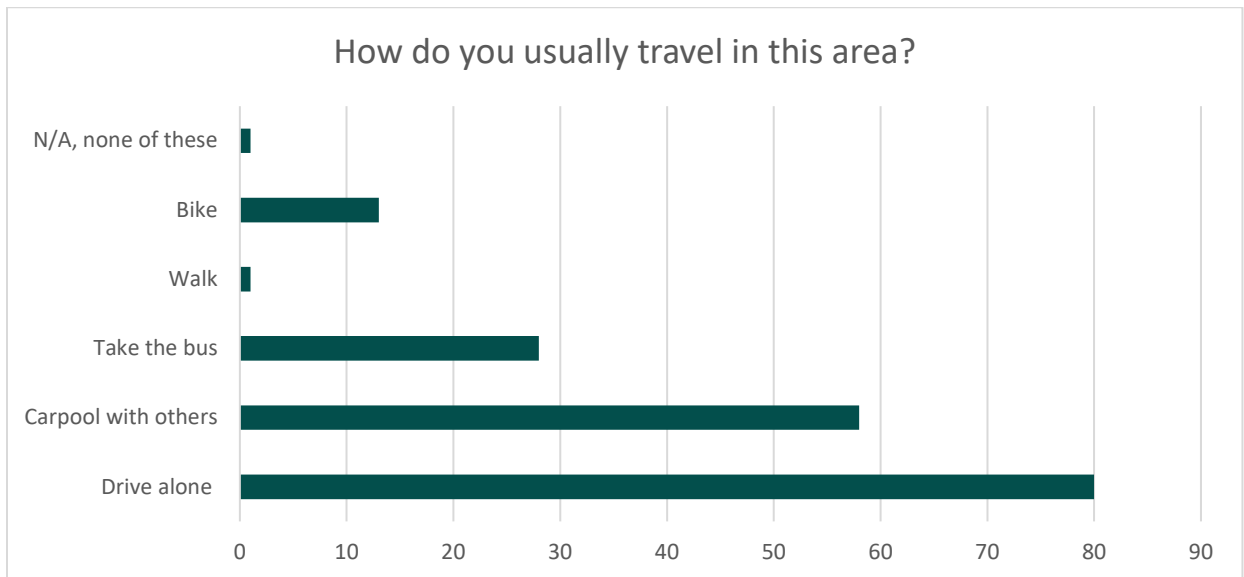


Figure 3: Comment Form Question 3 Results

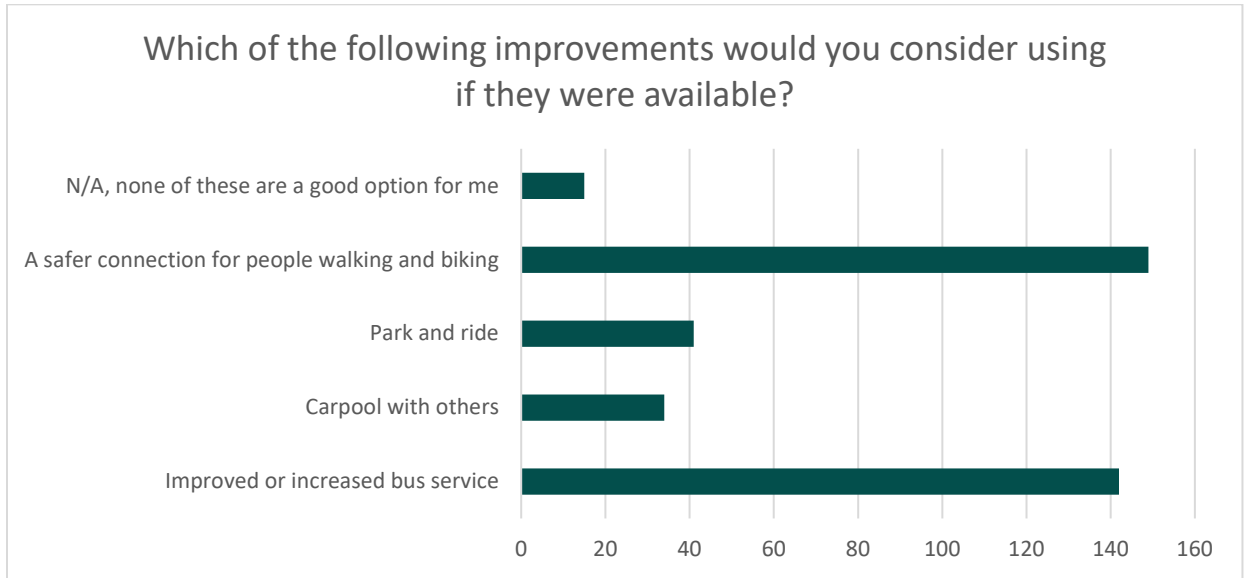


Figure 4: Comment Form Question 4 Results

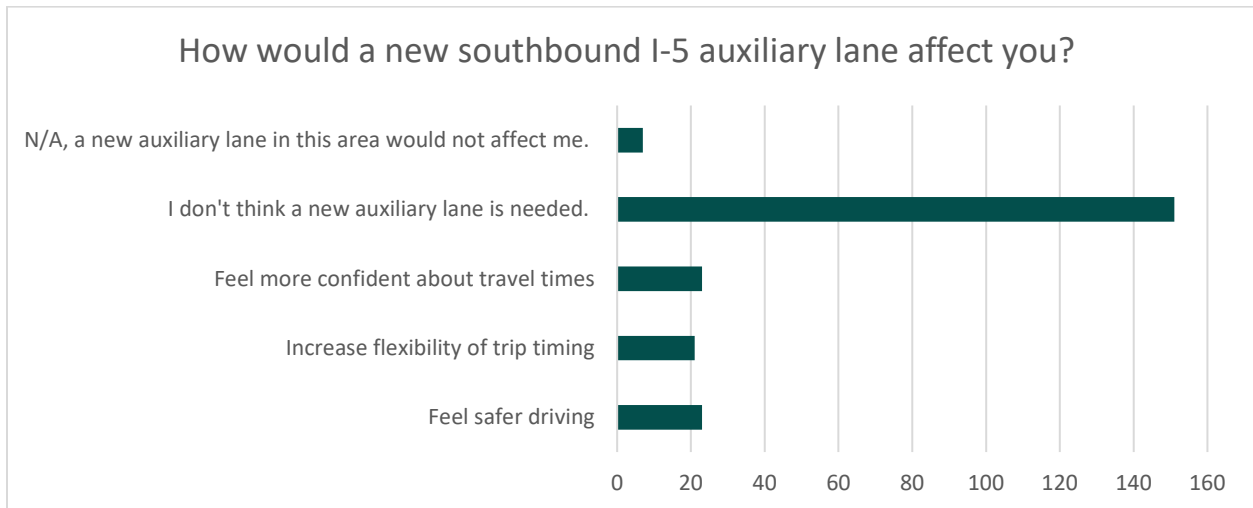


Figure 5: Comment Form Question 5 Results

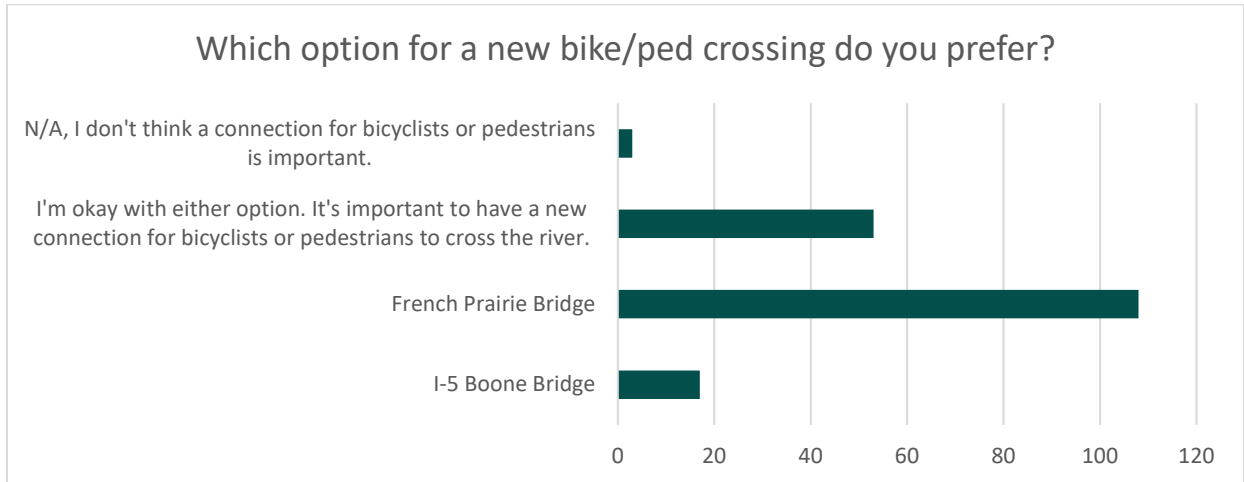


Figure 6: Comment Form Question 6 Results

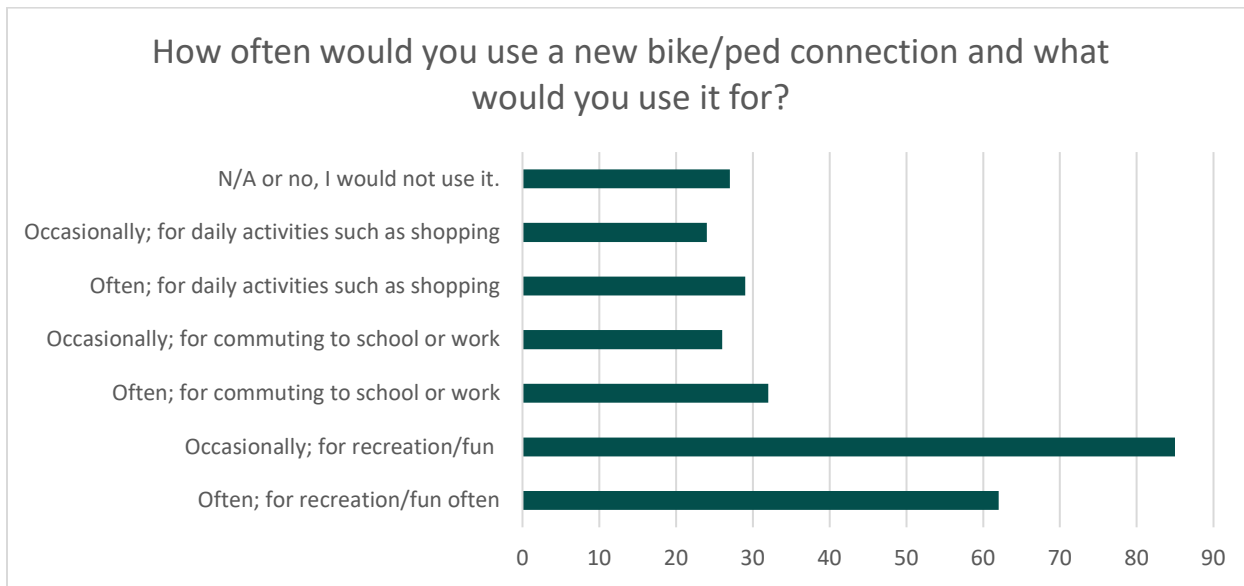


Figure 7: Comment Form Question 8 Results

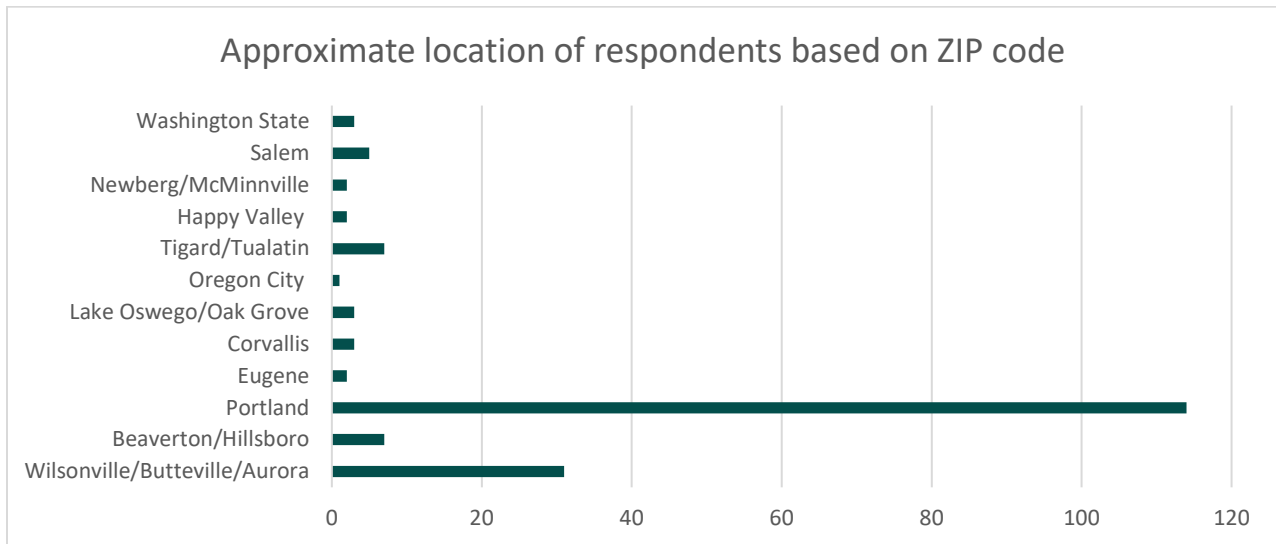


Figure 8: Comment Form Question 9 Results

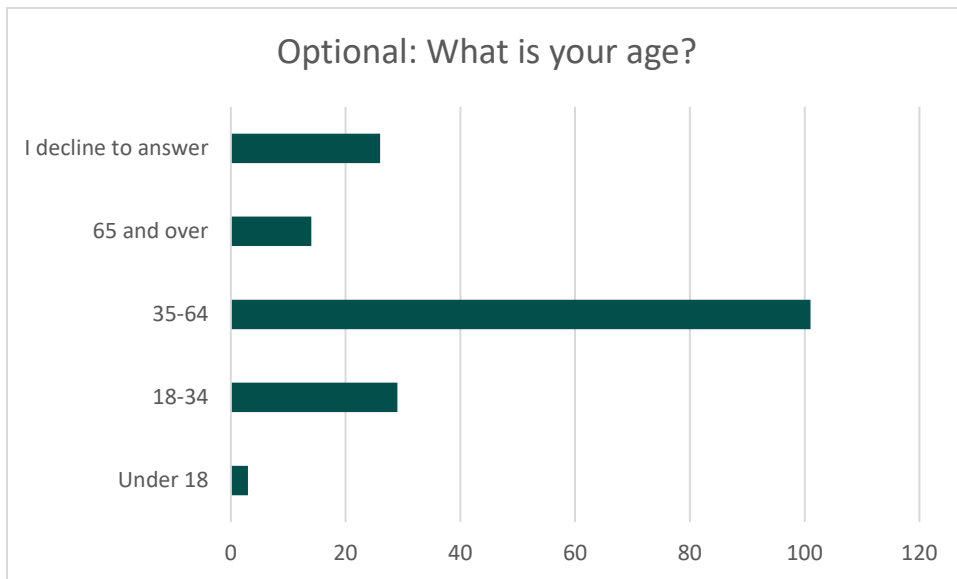
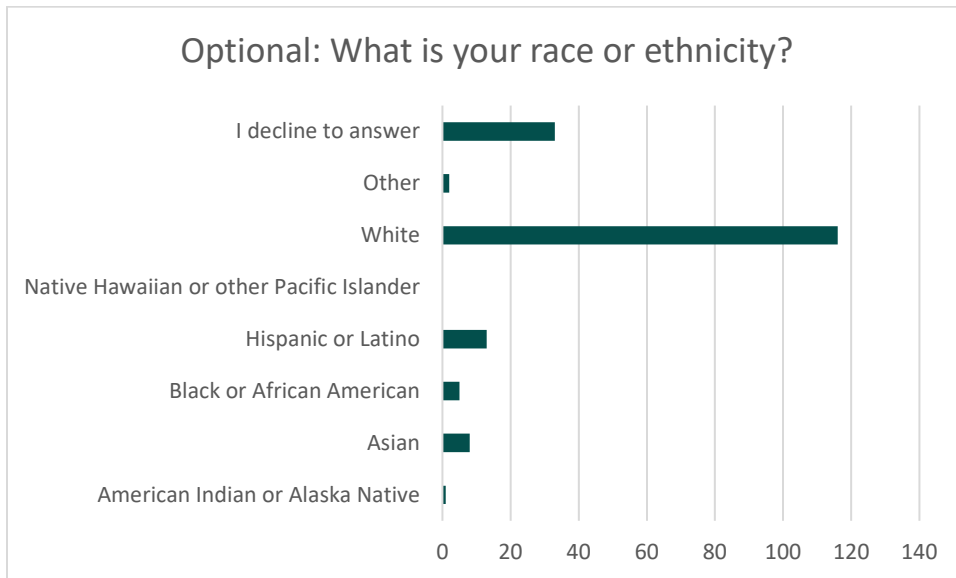


Figure 9: Comment Form Question 10 Results



6. Other Comments Received

In addition to the comment form, the project team received 18 written comments, two at the in-person open house and 16 via email, many from local residents. No phone calls were received. Nine of the 18 written comments indicated concerns with the French Prairie Bridge option, citing potential negative effects on the Old Town neighborhood, including issues related to public safety, traffic, parking and impacts to Boones Ferry Park. Several comments indicated support for adding an auxiliary lane on I-5 Southbound. A few comments conveyed support for the pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

7. Next Steps

The project team will review the comments and questions received during this round of outreach, along with input from agencies, and incorporate relevant feedback into the PEL and CFEC documentation. Once the PEL documentation is finalized, the project website will be updated with the outcomes, and an email will be sent to the project distribution list. This email will thank participants, confirm the completion of the PEL phase and outline next steps.

In future phases, additional public involvement opportunities will be available. Community members are encouraged to join the project email list, check the project website, and contact City of Wilsonville or ODOT staff for updates. They can also stay informed during the future NEPA environmental review phase, the timing of which will be dependent upon funding availability.

Appendix A

K21541 I-5 Boone Bridge Replacement Project

Fall 2024 Comment Form

Below is the text of the comment form, which was available online from Sept. 11 – 25, 2024.

I-5 Boone Bridge Replacement Project Comment Form

September 2024

ODOT is planning to replace the existing I-5 Boone Bridge with a new structure that can withstand a major earthquake. We will address the safety issues and improve how the bridge connects with interchanges north and south of the bridge. We will also improve the experience of pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the Willamette River in this location. .

Please tell us what you think about the I-5 Boone Bridge Replacement Project. Your thoughts will help inform the future design of the project.

*Required

1. How often do you travel on I-5 using the Boone Bridge over the Willamette River? Please choose one. *

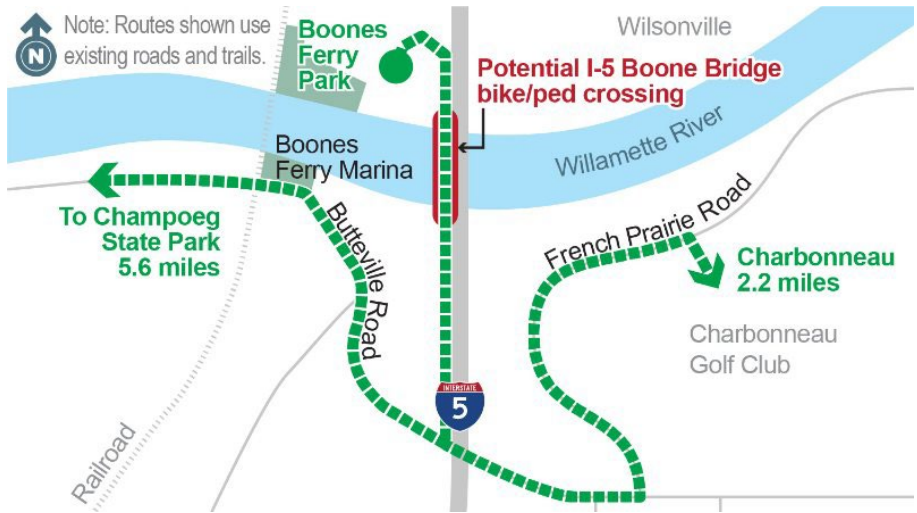
 - Daily
 - A few times per week
 - A few times per month
 - N/A, rarely or never

2. How do you *usually* travel in this area? Please choose one. *

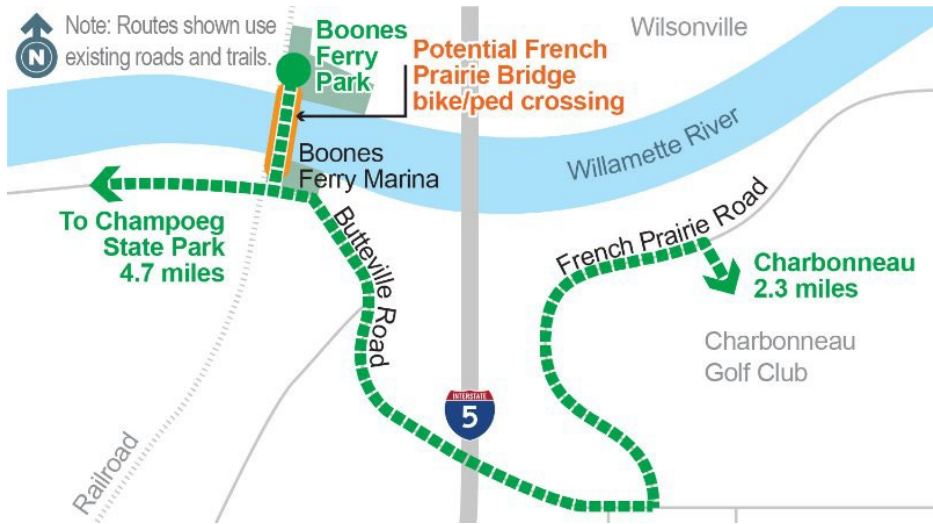
 - Drive alone
 - Carpool with others
 - Take the bus
 - Walk
 - Bike
 - N/A, none of these

3. Which of the following improvements would you consider using if they were available? Please choose all that apply. *
- Improved or increased bus service
 - Carpool with others
 - Park and ride
 - A safer connection for people walking and biking
 - N/A, none of these are a good option for me
4. How would it affect you if a southbound I-5 lane was added at the Boone Bridge from the Wilsonville Road to-ramp connection is known as an auxiliary lane. Please choose all that apply. entrance ramp to the OR 551 exit ramp? This type of ramp-to-ramp connection is known as an auxiliary lane. Please choose all that apply. *
- The additional time and space to merge on I-5 would help me feel safer driving in this area.
 - The improved traffic flow would increase flexibility of what times of day I would take trips.
 - The improved travel time reliability would help me feel more confident about what time I need to leave to get to my destination.
 - I don't think a new auxiliary lane is needed.
 - N/A, a new auxiliary lane in this area would not affect me.
5. We are considering two options for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the river. State law requires us to provide a path for pedestrians and bicyclists as part of this project. One option is a protected pedestrian and bicyclist path on a new I-5 Boone Bridge. With this option, the new I-5 bridge would include a path separated from the motor vehicle traffic by a crash-proof barrier. To build the path on the I-5 Boone Bridge, no new right-of-way (property) would be needed. It would have lower impact on environmental resources compared to the French Prairie Bridge. The other option is a new bridge, called the French Prairie Bridge, located west of the I-5 Boone Bridge. The French Prairie Bridge would provide a new connection separate from I-5. It would not be open to motor vehicle traffic. The French Prairie Bridge would be more expensive and would have property impacts. The new river crossing would impact environmental resources more, including natural and recreational resources. Potential impacts to cultural resources would need to be determined. Based on the information known today, which option do you prefer? Please choose one. *

- **I-5 Boone Bridge:** It is 5.6 miles from Boones Ferry Park to Champoeg State Park via I-5 Boone Bridge. It is 2.2 miles from Boones Ferry Park to Charbonneau Golf Club via I-5 Boone Bridge.



- **French Prairie Bridge:** It is 4.7 miles from Boones Ferry Park to Champoeg State Park via French Prairie Bridge. It is 2.3 miles from Boones Ferry Park to Charbonneau Golf Club via French Prairie Bridge.



- I'm okay with either option. It's important to have a new connection for bicyclists or pedestrians to cross the river.
- N/A, I don't think a connection for bicyclists or pedestrians is important.

6. If one of these new connections were made over the Willamette River, would you use it to walk, bike or roll? What would you use it for? Please choose all that apply. *
- Yes, I would use it **for recreation/fun often** (a few times per month or more).
 - Yes, I would use it **for recreation/fun occasionally** (less than once monthly).
 - Yes, I would use it **for commuting to school or work often** (a few times per month or more).
 - Yes, I would use it **for commuting to school or work occasionally** (less than once monthly).
 - Yes, I would use it **for daily activities** such as shopping or getting to appointments **often** (a few times per month or more).
 - Yes, I would use it **for daily activities** such as shopping or getting to appointments **occasionally** (less than once monthly).
 - N/A or no, I would not use it.
7. Optional: Is there anything else you would like to share with the project team?
8. What is your zip code? Please enter your 5-digit zip code.
9. Optional: What is your age?
- Under 18
 - 18-34
 - 35-64
 - 65 and over
 - I decline to answer
10. Optional: What is your race or ethnicity? Please choose all that apply.
- American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Other
 - I decline to answer