



Save Helvetia.org

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*Advancing policies, leaders and actions
that protect Helvetia's
treasured resources*

May 20, 2015

RE: Transportation Futures Study-Comments Public Involvement Plan

The first on-line open house invited the public to comment on the Draft Values piece and the Taking Stock Draft. While not invited to do so, we also provide comment on JLA's Public Involvement Plan.

JLA Public Involvement Inc. is under contract with David Evans and Associates, who in turn is under contract with Washington County for the Transportation Futures Study. DLUT is the lead county department in the study. Does this oblige DEA and JLA Public Involvement Inc. to work within the DLUT Public Involvement Guidelines for Transportation Planning, Programs, and Projects, as approved in 2014?

The JLA Public Involvement Plan has no reference to the legal framework of citizen involvement such as SB 100 or the several county ordinances that speak to it. JLA's Plan does not reference DLUT's new Guidelines. If this plan is under the umbrella of DLUT's guidelines, we recommend it be identified and provide a link to the Guidelines so that citizens might readily access it. **In Oregon, citizen involvement is based in law, ordinance, and expectation.**

The JLA Public Involvement Plan makes no reference to Oregon's **Public Meeting Law**. Are all elements of the study process subject to the Oregon Public Meeting Law? For example, will the consultants interview neighboring and regional officials in private or in public? Will these interviews be available for public observation? Will work group notices be posted? Will those meetings be available for public observation?

Will the recommendations of "key stakeholders" be made available to the public? **One of the goals of the Public Involvement Plan should be to assure transparency throughout.** Supportive taxpayers would need to know how the study and perspectives were vetted.

The JLA Public Involvement Plan offers many opportunities for city officials and city and county planners to meet and make comment. It provides opportunities for businesses and industry leaders, chambers of commerce, and associations. In contrast, there are very few opportunities for rural views and perspectives. The West Side Bypass concept ^{has} been a substantial concern to rural farmland and surrounding rural communities. More recently, Mayor Willey's Beltway/Corridor concept would pose a new substantial threat to rural farmland and rural communities. **We recommend that communities,**

vocations, and areas that might be negatively impacted by study scenarios be given ample ~~given~~ voice and opportunity from the beginning.

The JLA Public Involvement Plan gives the public largely on-line involvement opportunities. **On-line citizen involvement** is relatively new and has not been used to the extent that it is now being rolled out by this study. DLUT's Guidelines do not speak in much detail about on-line citizen involvement. Can the JLA Public Involvement Plan reference what studies they have used to create this scientific on-line, process? What does the research say about how the public responds? Do all sectors of the public respond equally? What is the plan to bring citizens to the on-line open house? How are survey questions designed? The first open house contained questions that were not neutrally framed. Who is framing the survey questions? Does the public have any opportunities to review draft questions before they go to an on-line open house?

The plan asserts that because the study will be "technical in nature" and will not result in "a recommended plan or specific outcome", the **public will not be allowed to comment on final documents and conclusions**. Many processes allow for minority reporting, our Supreme Court being but one example. Are you really sure you want to maintain this tone regarding citizen/taxpayer involvement?

For the Board,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Bailey".

Robert Bailey, Secretary
Save Helvetia