

OLYMPIAN DRIVE
EXTENSION

Open House Summary

**Prepared for the
City of Urbana**

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October 2010

***Olympian Drive Extension Design Phase
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Introduction

Sponsored by the City of Urbana in association with the City of Champaign, the Olympian Drive Extension Design Phase is an 18-month design project to determine how the Olympian Drive Extension will look and operate. The project's final deliverables are construction design plans.

The Olympian Drive Design Phase is broadly following a process, which the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) calls "context sensitive solutions" or CSS. CSS is an interdisciplinary approach that seeks effective transportation solutions by working with stakeholders to develop, build and maintain cost-effective transportation facilities which fit into and reflect the project's surroundings or "context." Stakeholders are any person(s) or organization(s), which have a direct stake in the project being studied such as residents and landowners near a project, advocates for policy, community and historic interests and elected officials. The Olympian Drive Steering Committee felt that this project should use this approach because of the community's interest. In CSS, stakeholders are involved at the project's start and throughout. This summer, the public engagement approach had an extensive stakeholder focus which included stakeholder interviews, individual roundtable meetings for property owners, area officials, elected officials and business owners and a final combined roundtable meeting.

On Oct 6, 2010, the Olympian Drive Extension Steering Committee hosted the first public meeting commencing the public engagement phase of the design project. Held from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Urbana Civic Center, the meeting's primary objectives were to introduce the public to the project and project team, confirm stakeholder input gathered during the summer and solicit feedback regarding issues and concerns impacting roadway design. Fifty-four participants registered at the event. Of those attending, 59% completed the stakeholder value form and 70% completed the design option comment form (Appendix A). Another 21 individuals mailed completed forms to the project team.

Meeting Format

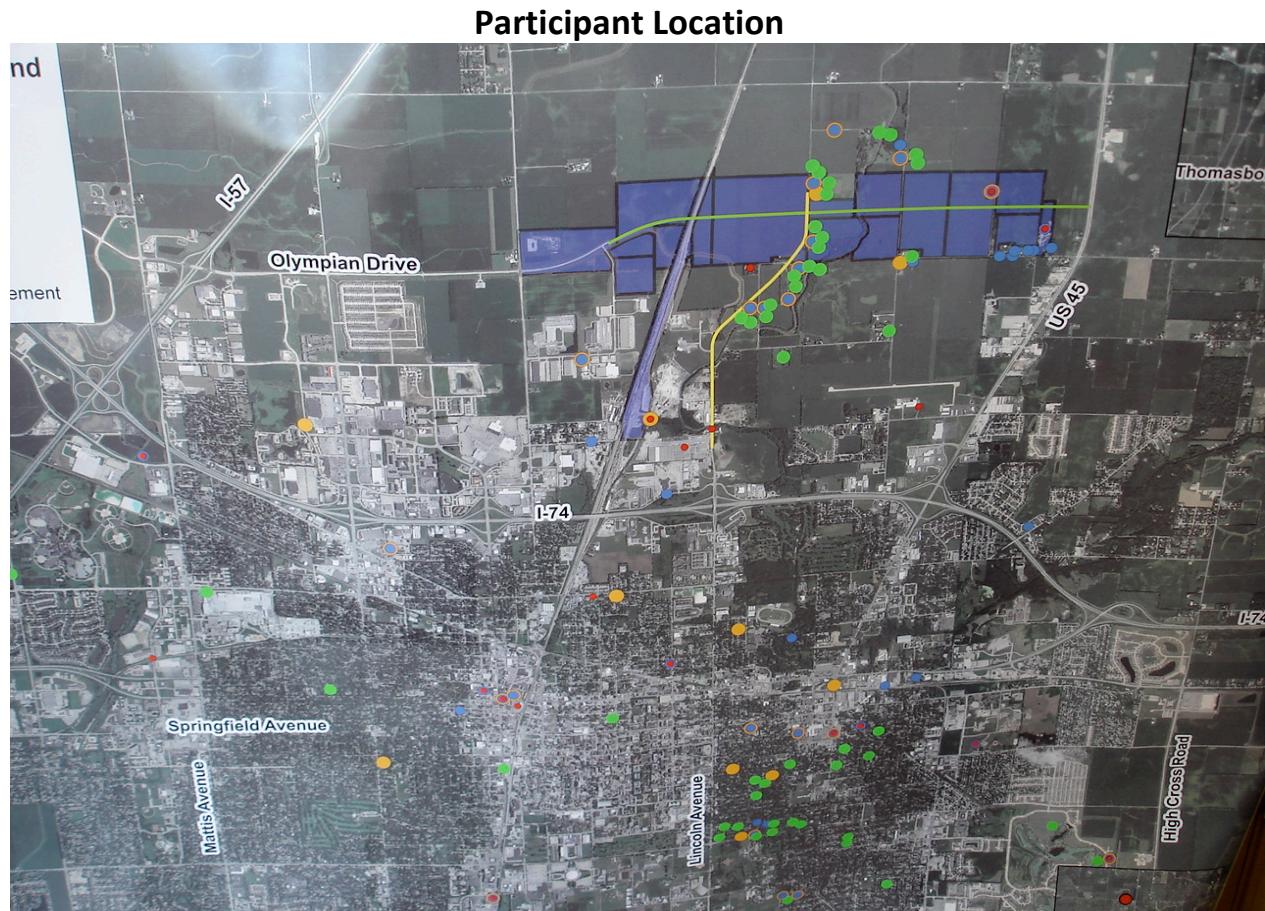
Structured as an open house, attendees had the opportunity to view display boards at five information stations staffed by the Steering Committee and project team consultants. The stations were:

- Project Overview;
- Planning History;
- Public Engagement;
- Design Options; and
- Your Engagement.

In addition to display boards, attendees viewed a fly-through video, added dots on a location map to illustrate their residential locations, and posted comments for all meeting participants to view. The fly-through video showed a time-lapse of development over the past 16 years, including completed portions of the road starting at the west end near I-57 to the east end at Apollo Drive.

The stakeholder engagement location map displayed 74 address locations (see display below) from summer meeting registrations (i.e., red dots=stakeholder interview; yellow dot= individual roundtable

meetings; blue dots=combined roundtable meeting). Sixty (60) open house attendees added green dots to indicate their residence. A total of 134 resident locations spread throughout the Urbana/Champaign urbanized area are illustrated on the map.



After visiting each station, attendees were encouraged to post feedback that was not previously captured in the stakeholder value and design option comment forms. Only two comments were posted and both were in response to an independent need assessment request.

The Need Assessment post card was developed by a group of stakeholders that hired a consultant to represent them. The consultant gave open house attendees a postcard before they entered the meeting. Fifteen meeting participants (27%) submitted need assessment postcards along with their open house comment forms. The purpose and need for the project was established in the Phase I Design and Location Study and approved in 1997 by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The cards request that financial need for the project be reviewed. If the agencies were going to study financial need, it would have been done prior to the Phase I study. A copy of the need assessment postcard is included in Appendix B.

Stakeholder Values

On a scale of one to five, with one being most important, respondents were asked to rank their top five value statements. Respondents want an open public involvement process (1.71) that work towards consensus (2.40). They want connectivity to U.S. Route 45 (2.44), fair treatment of landowners (2.80) and connectivity to North Lincoln Avenue (2.87). The table below provides a distribution of responses, as well as the overall rating for each value statement.

Roadway Issues	Level of Importance					Rating
	Least (5)				Most (1)	
Maintain a public involvement process that is open, responsive to concerns and fair to all parties	10%	0%	10%	10%	69%	1.71
Work towards consensus among community members, stakeholders and design team	5%	10%	13%	65%	8%	2.40
Pursue connectivity to US 45	44%	11%	27%	0%	22%	2.44
Treat landowners fairly with regard to the protection of their property rights and the recognition of their property values	12%	12%	62%	12%	2%	2.80
Pursue connectivity to North Lincoln Avenue	31%	19%	6%	19%	25%	2.87
Minimize project's negative impact on local agriculture and food production	5%	59%	9%	16%	11%	3.29
Limit unwanted traffic impacts (noise, high traffic volumes – especially truck traffic)	25%	25%	25%	25%	0%	3.50
Complete the project on time and within budget	13%	50%	25%	13%	0%	3.62
Obtain adequate funding for the project and manage funds responsibly	36%	29%	21%	14%	0%	3.85
Use the project to stimulate regional growth and economic development	77%	6%	9%	3%	6%	4.46

Several respondents selected “other” and noted specific concerns for the corridor such as destroyed farmland and watershed. Some respondents mentioned a need for in-fill. Others agreed an east-west connection was needed; however, a compromise was desired including consideration of other alternatives including a “no-build” option or Ford-Harris Road alternative. Improving the traffic situation was noted as a benefit, specifically for Leverett Road. Finally, other respondents were concerned about either Urbana’s or the State of Illinois’ ability to pay for the road extension. A copy of the completed mailed comment form is included in Appendix B along with verbatim comments.

Design Option

Regarding how the Olympian Drive Extension will look and operate, attendees were asked several questions about potential design enhancements. Mailed comment forms lobbied for the completion of an independent need assessment in response to every question regardless of topic. These responses represent 34% of the compiled responses.

Project Phasing

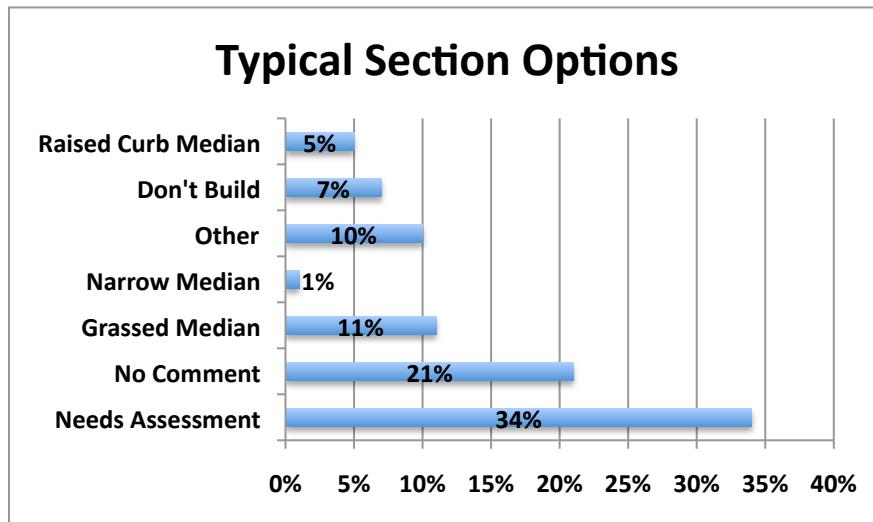
On a scale from one to four, with one being top priority, respondents ranked what is best for providing access and economic development opportunities for the community. Project A – Olympian Drive over the Canadian National Railroad tracks to North Lincoln Avenue - was the top priority, followed by Project X, North Lincoln Avenue to Olympian Drive. The table below shows a distribution of responses, as well as the overall ranking for each project.

Project Phasing	Priority Order				Rating
	(Top) 1	2	3	(Least) 4	
Project A – Apollo Dr. over Canadian National Railroad	53%	5%	26%	16%	1.89
Project B – N. Lincoln Ave. to US 45	21%	26%	5%	47%	2.89
Project C – Olympian Dr. to Duncan Road	11%	42%	26%	21%	2.84
Project X – N. Lincoln Ave. to Olympian Drive	16%	26%	42%	16%	2.37

Mailed comment forms expressed concern that the North Lincoln Avenue and Olympian Drive projects were being “married.” Because the stakeholders identified North Lincoln Avenue as a top priority during summer stakeholder meetings, the Steering Committee is investigating separate design funding for North Lincoln Avenue.

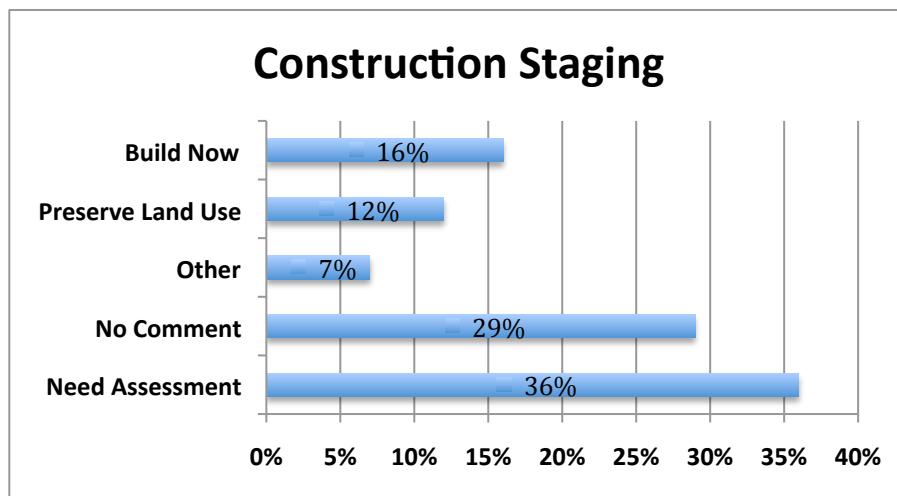
Typical Section

Regarding the typical cross section, 7% of the respondents did not want to build anything in the center median. Of the 28% of respondents that wanted a median, 11% wanted a grassed median followed by 5% that wanted a raised curb median. The chart below provides a distribution of responses. Several other comments (listed in Appendix B) cover a variety of topic areas such as cost, number of roadway lanes and bicycle accommodations.



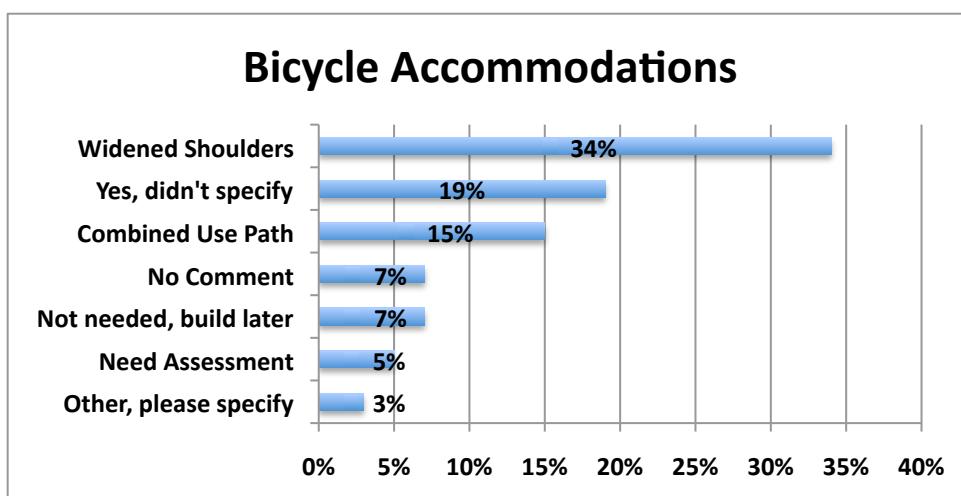
Construction Staging Options

Respondents were divided about construction staging between building the additional embankment or preserving land use. More respondents wanted to build everything immediately (16%) versus 12% that desired to preserve the adjacent land. The chart below provides a distribution of responses. Appendix B contains several other comments.



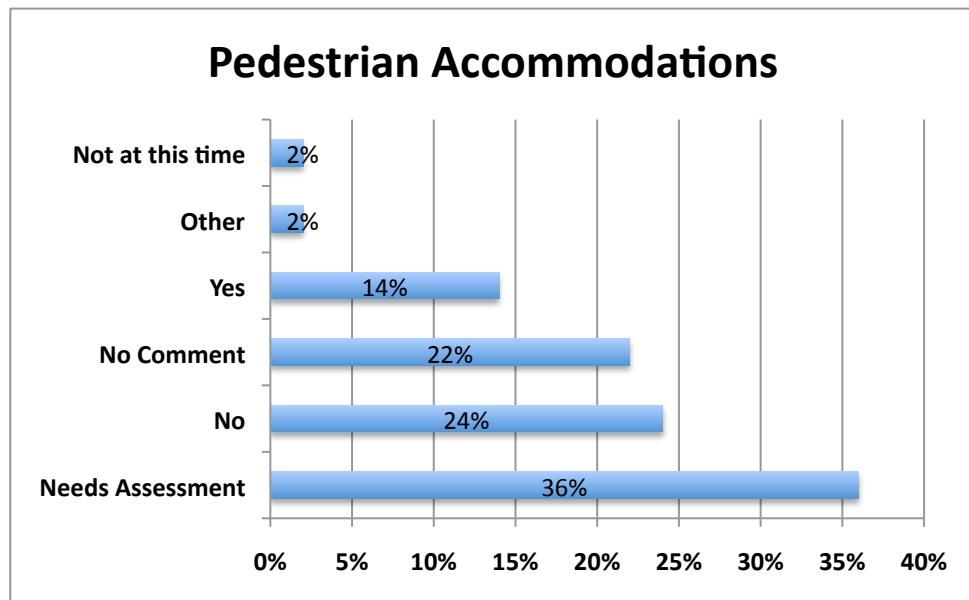
Bicycle Accommodations

With respect to bicycle accommodations, more than half of the respondents thought accommodations should be provided, but were divided about how. Comments showed 34% wanted widened shoulders, 19% didn't specify and 15% preferred combined use paths. The chart below provides a distribution of responses.



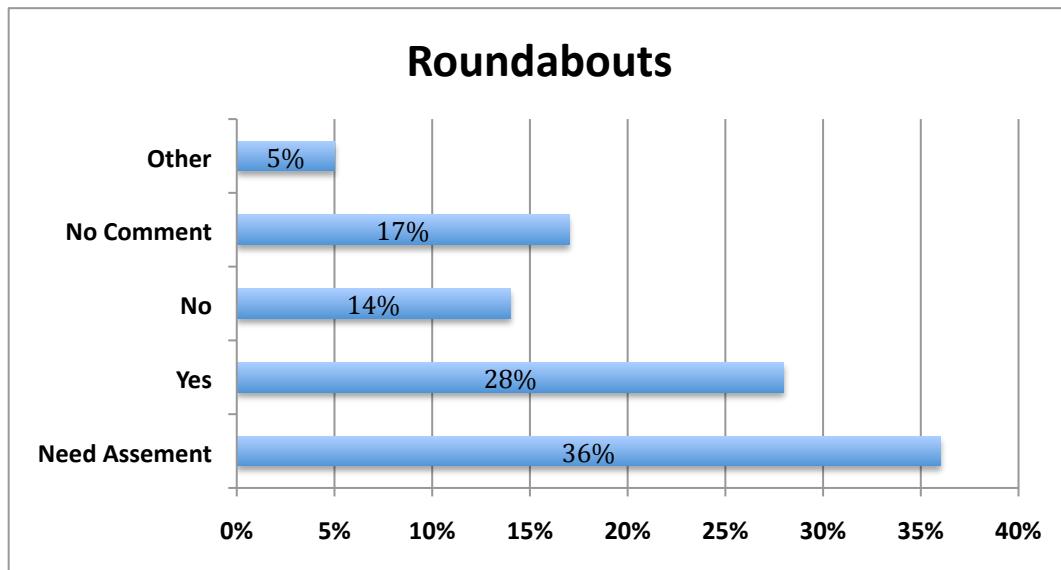
Pedestrian Accommodations

A little less than a quarter of the respondents did not want pedestrian accommodations or did not comment. A number of respondents were concerned about safety or desire combined bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The chart below provides the distribution of responses and Appendix B contains the verbatim comments.



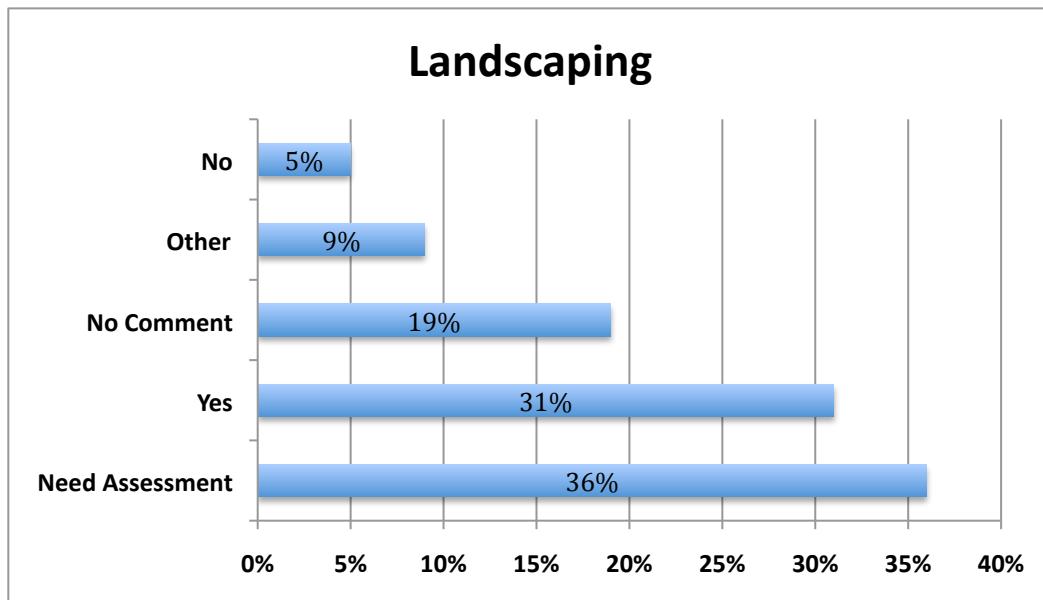
Roundabouts

With respect to roundabouts, more respondents (28%) wanted this type of intersection over those that did not (14%). A number of respondents commented they are not sure this “fits” with Champaign County and were concerned about safety. The chart below provides a distribution of responses. Verbatim comments are listed in Appendix B.



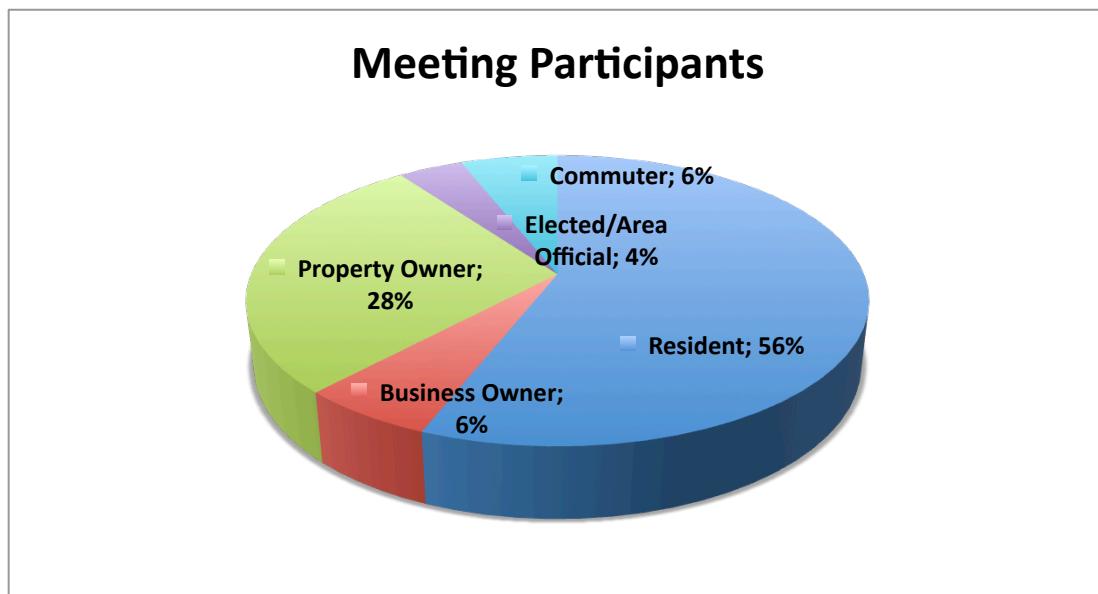
Landscaping

Almost one-third of respondents (31%) wanted to landscape while only 5% did not desire this enhancement. The chart below summarizes the respondents' results.



Meeting Participants

Slightly more than three-fourths of the meeting participants were residents (56%) or property owners (28%). A cross match with the roundtable sign-in sheets showed that 43 of the 56 attendees were "first-time" project participants.



Meeting Notification Sources

Slightly more than four out of ten respondents learned about the open house from a flyer (8%), a newspaper ad (30%) or a newsletter (10%). Collectively, electronic communication was responsible for 36% of the attendees finding out about the meeting via the website (23%), Facebook (5%) or an email (8%). *Note: Since respondents were asked to select “all sources,” the sum of the sources exceeds 100%.*



Respondent Satisfaction

Almost one-third of the respondents felt the information provided was “very useful” (32%) and the team was “very helpful” (34%). Although almost half of the respondents (49%) felt the meeting was “very organized,” a little less than a third (30%) felt the meeting was “well worth attending.”

Almost half of the respondents felt the information was useful (55%), the team was helpful (62%) and the meeting was organized (48%) and worth attending (57%).

Additional Comments

Listed in Appendix B are more than 41 additional comments that were received from respondents. The comments spoke to several topic areas, included funding, timing, cost and roundabouts.

Conclusion

As stated on the open house welcome handout, the public meeting was designed to:

- Find out about concerns, issues and community values;
- Provide information on stakeholder input including project phasing and extending North Lincoln Avenue to Olympian Drive; and
- Get feedback about design elements such as bike lanes, median and other right-of-way elements in the design corridor.

Some respondents opposed the design phase process and questioned the decision to move forward

with completion of the roadway as originally planned. However, many stakeholders liked the approved connection between Champaign and Urbana from I-57 to U.S. Route 45. Stakeholders also recognized the need for north-south access on North Lincoln Avenue.

Completing the roadway and creating accessibility are critical aspects of regional economic development. In the meantime, preserving land until demand warrants expansion to four lanes as well as building only needed design enhancements have been indicated as key aspects to building consensus.

Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and a roundabout intersection are two components that would transform the corridor, but public input indicated the former is not required for an industrial area. Likewise, desired landscaping can be added later.

OLYMPIAN DRIVE EXTENSION COMMENTS

Your input is an important part of determining how the Olympian Drive Extension will look and operate. To that end, this form contains several questions about potential design enhancements for Olympian Drive and North Lincoln Avenue. The information boards relating to these enhancements are located at Station 4. Steering Committee and Project Team members are on-hand at the Station to answer questions or provide additional information. Your answers will be used to help determine the next steps of the project. Thank you for attending and for giving your input.

- 1) **Project Phasing** – Between projects A, B, C and X, what order do you feel is the best for providing access and economic development opportunity for this region? (Rank from 1 to 4 with 1 being your top preference)

_____ A _____ B _____ C _____ X

- 2) **Typical Section Options** - What are your thoughts about using a large grassed median, smaller raised curb median or the smallest flush median? _____

- 3) **Construction Staging Options** - What are your thoughts on building the additional embankment at this time or preserving the adjacent land use? _____

- 4) **Bicycle Accommodations** - What are your thoughts regarding bicycle accommodations? _____

- 5) **Pedestrian Accommodations** - What are your thoughts on needs for sidewalks? _____

- 6) **Roundabouts** – What are your thoughts on the use of roundabout intersections for Olympian Drive (Olympian/Lincoln)? _____

- 7) **Landscaping** – What are your thoughts on the use of landscaping? _____

Public Involvement:

- 1) Which of the following best describes you? (please check all that apply)
 Resident Elected or Area Official
 Business Owner Commuter
 Property Owner Other: _____

- 2) How did you find out about this Open House? (please check all that apply)
 Newsletter Community Organization
 Flyer Public Official
 Web site Friend / Relative
 Facebook Neighbor
 E-mail Co-Worker
 Newspaper ad Other: _____

- 3) Please evaluate this Open House by circling your answer to the following . . .
 - a. The information provided was:
Not Very Useful Useful Very Useful
 1 2 3

 - b. The study team was:
Not Helpful Helpful Very Helpful
 1 2 3

 - c. In general, the Open House was:
Not Well Organized Organized Well Organized
 1 2 3
Not Worth Attending Worth Attending Well Worth Attending
 1 2 3

Additional comments:

THANK YOU!

OLYMPIAN DRIVE
EXTENSION |

**YOUR
TOP FIVE**

Identify the top five priority statements below. Please rank the top five (5) statements 1-5 in order of importance to you (1 = highest importance; 5 = least importance) regarding your desires for the Olympian Drive Extension Project:

- Pursue connectivity to North Lincoln Avenue
- Minimize project's negative impact on local agriculture and food production
- Work towards consensus among community members, stakeholders and design team
- Treat landowners fairly with regard to the protection of their property rights and the recognition of their property values
- Obtain adequate funding for the project and manage funds responsibly
- Complete the project on time and within budget
- Use the project to stimulate regional growth and economic development
- Limit unwanted traffic impacts (noise, high traffic volumes – especially heavy truck traffic)
- Maintain a public involvement process that is open, responsive to concerns, and fair to all parties
- Pursue connectivity to US 45

Other _____

Thank you for your feedback!

Appendix B – Verbatim Comments

Typical Section Option

- Go Prairie
- Open large medians is my preference
- Large grassed median
- I think a 2-lane road with a center median that includes rain gardens along with bike lanes, a multi-use path and any needed berms to shield adjoining land use is preferable.
- Maybe use a narrower section to preserve adjacent farmland.
- Should be 2 lanes, not 4 lanes
- No Median
- Road Not needed
- Flush Median
- The wider the median the safer the road - wider grassed is my preference
- No preference
- I like the increased safety of large grassed median but am concerned about controlling speed of traffic.
- Smallest flush median
- This is all jumping the gun. The needs in depth assessment.
- Smallest flush median with bike lanes
- Maximize curb appeal while spending responsibly
- Smallest - why are you building the road for speed? I thought it was supposed to be 45 mph? If higher speeds needed take I-74
- I don't want you to do any of this. Why is that not an option?
- I Don't want it built
- Keep it as Small as possible to limit impact and keep costs down - the need only not yet established
- Prefer larger grassed
- Large grassed is the best
- Why are we wasting time and money on a project that doesn't exist yet?
- Smaller raised curb median seems to be workable and a good compromise (safe)
- I favor a smaller raised curb median
- OK

Construction Staging Options

- If you Have the Money
- Construct all Embankment
- I am not in favor of planning for 4 lanes. I think a 2-lane road with roundabouts and complete street design will work well into the future.
- Maybe don't build it all as a compromise to save adjacent farm uses.
- Preserve adjacent land use
- Road not needed
- At this time
- Building ahead would be prudent
- preserve adjacent land use
- No preference
- Build embankment
- No
- Preserve adjacent land
- Preserve
- Build to reduce all overall cost
- Build it to reduce cost overall
- It makes sense to build out the embankment, but only from Apollo to Lincoln extension.
- Build 2-lanes first, purchase land but leave additional area undeveloped so it can be farmed as long as possible
- Build Now
- Please preserve as much farm ground as possible

Appendix B – Verbatim Comments

Bicycle Accommodations

- Yes
- Separate combined use path
- Provide safety
- Need a multi-use path for bikes and pedestrians
- I think bike lanes as well as multi-use pathways should be included.
- We absolutely need some bike accommodations for transportation and recreation in this corridor.
- Later
- No
- Keep them totally separated from
- Build it in now
- N. Lincoln is a decent route to get out of town and not making that worse is a priority. It would be tough for it to be worse than other northern routes out of town.
- Include
- No
- Widened shoulders
- No

Pedestrian Accommodations

- Yes
- Share the Bike path
- Not yet
- Need a multi-use path for bikes and pedestrians
- Depending on adjoining land uses. At the very best a multi-use pathway is needed on at least one side.
- Yes, we need sidewalks. Perhaps only one side is sufficient, depending on adjacent development.
- Later
- No
- Again - we need them but they should be separated from all regular traffic
- No preference
- Include

Appendix B – Verbatim Comment

Roundabouts

- OK
- Worth a look
- Favor
- Great Idea
- I think they are mandatory if you want max. traffic flow and safety.
- Yes, give roundabouts a fair consideration.
- Yes
- Good for emergency medical practices
- No
- I am not enthusiastic but they are a viable alternative
- Ok
- Sure, give it a shot
- Good
- Yes
- Too unusual for this area, too trendy, takes extra land
- No
- I like roundabouts but this summer in Belgium and France every traffic accident I saw was at a roundabout. I'm not convinced they are safe.
- Prefer not to have them.
- Don't like them - prefer regular
- Conventional is ok
- Better than signals...
- I lived in England 2 years and was not favorably impressed with roundabouts. They slow you down and wear out your tires.
- Roundabout is a no-brainer! Signalized not wanted.
- Yes
- Not sure
- I would favor these over light controlled intersections
- OK

Appendix B – Verbatim Comment

Mailed Design Option Comment Form Verbatim Response (for every question)

- Without an approved and fully studied needs assessment in place, the scope of the project and its overall value and support in the community is unknown, rendering this question completely premature. Conduct an independent needs assessment study to study and correlate all aspects of any project scope to be undertaken in this region first. Without this independent needs assessment conducted and studied, median-related inquiries are premature and pointless at this stage.
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Appendix B – Verbatim Comment

Additional Comments

- I like the preferred alignment for Lincoln Avenue.
- To me it only makes sense. Now proceed to Lincoln as cost effect as possible. P.S. Cut the Crap and start building.
- The design of the road should incorporate all the best sustainability practices and safety designs. Make it a showcase for low impact roadway design.
- Failed to address citizens concerns about needs for the project. Not convenience the drive is needed, because there needs to be an independent study completed by a body that doesn't have any vested or self-interest in the project.
- Olympian Drive Extension is 1) Not needed 2) based on old data and economic models 3) will create more roadway that requires maintenance and the city cannot maintain current roads 4) Will remove farm land and replace it with concrete 5) wastes taxpayer money - according to IDOT rep, this project is based on guesses and politics
- As long as our population grows at historic rates than construction or something like it is inevitable.
- This show appeared to be a display of a fait accompli which was held to partially justify taxpayers money that paid for the "hands on 'study'"
- Very one sided no opposition as to why to road should not be built
- See comments on Q1 - The assumptions of what's going into the assessments are not clear. The conclusions are suspect.
- I don't want it built because I live on Olympian Road and it will go through the woods north of our trailer park.
- This is some thing we need to spur jobs
- Urbana cannot reasonably attract commercial and industrial development. This is a personal project for Urbana's mayor, not an intelligent use of taxpayer money. This Open House is a sham - presenting this as is the project itself is a foregone conclusion. 'hosts' are clearly bias and misleading. This is sprawl in a community that pretends to oppose it. Make better use of the existing infrastructure. (N. Lincoln, Philo Road, Etc.)
- I'm from the Boston area - don't really like rotary / roundabouts... but I guess they're better than a signaled intersection (More cost effective). I see no need to build Project B at this time - A & X make sense, as long as we mitigate losses to farmers.
- I am a lifelong resident of Urbana, and my ancestors (Webbers) settled the area, so I would like to see it prosper. However, with the state and nation essentially bankrupt, nice projects like Olympian Drive need to be deferred until we get out of this hole, going ahead with projects like this, even though admirable, just digs the hole deeper.
- I see the need for an up-to-date independent needs, assessment for all proposed phases of the project. Should add less air pollution to roundabout advantages plus pedestrian safety.

- As a retired homeowner and tax payer on a fixed income, I have to always ask, "Do I need this? If I do, are there affordable alternatives?" Even if someone offers to pay for a large portion of the cost, if the remaining cost makes me unable to pay my current obligations - I must decide I can't afford it, no matter how nice it would be! I do not like the mindset that says the federal government is offering money for this project, so we'd better do it so as to not "loose" The money offered - even if we can't afford it! A look at the present state of our over-entitled economy shows the inevitable result of this thinking - huge tax burdens extending far into the future. Do we really need this? Can we live without it? Can we wait until we payoff some current obligations and our friends are in better shape?
- I am very much against (strongly against) any and all expansion and destroying good, black, production farm ground. We have talked for years, attended meetings to voice our concern and yet the message does not get heard. Why? Because someone totally out of touch gets and idea and acts like a fulminous bulldozer with little regard for the people living on the land. We don't need this. Listen to the people.
- To consider all reasonable options. To really listen to concerns and try to build consensus.
- I am concerned that the public discussion has become too negative and polarized. Let's find common ground from which to build.
- To consider farmland preservation overlays for those property owners who want to continue farming.
- The Information provided was cart-before-horse. The public's input on the value and need for the overall project should be sought, not on things like roundabouts, medians and embankments. The study team was not really interested in what people had to say, but rather in getting the public to say what they wanted them to say regarding pre-determined regarding construction issues, not about the value of the overall project. The public's input on the value and need for the overall project should be sought and the session should have been arranged and focused as such, not on things like roundabouts, medians and embankments. Because the session was part of a federally mandated process for the road because the steering committee thinks it's going to build, this question is difficult to answer. If the stakeholders don't show, that counts against them, but if they do they are asked to attend and comment on a session that is focused on something they are not interested in talking about: I want to see a needs assessment conducted and studied, and for the public to have a true voice in whether this project is needed, not just asked questions about things like roundabouts, medians and embankments.
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Appendix B – Verbatim Comment

Your Top Five

- As a laborer from local 703, I worked 2 years on the Olympian Drive interchange. This project should have been done long ago.
- Connectivity to US 45 would take some traffic off of Leverett Road and Ford Harris.
- Concerned about how city of Urbana will pay for Lincoln Ave. extension.
- Compromise is essential!
- #1) I suggest an alternative: Use Ford Harris Road (one mile north of Olympian Drive) as the East-West conduit from Highway 45 to Champaign - a straight shot that does not need to be "Straightened" or developed.
- Use the Ford Harris roadway as base for new Olympian Drive extension.
- None. No Build option until independent needs study is completed. Thank you!
- C-U is growing everyday - we need E-W street to connect to main thoroughfares. Florida - extended - Washington - 4 lanes - Columbia - to connect to Lincoln and 57. This would bring business (to the city) and commerce and jobs, which are direly needed!
- It has not yet been demonstrated to my satisfaction that development will actually lead to jobs. There are lots of empty spaces in C-U on the periphery. Let's practice in-fill.
- A true need based on reasonable data has yet to be established. This promises only to destroy land that can't be replaced. There are Way Too Many empty spaces in both C and U already. Changing residential areas to light industrial has yet to be discussed. I'm strongly against all aspects of this initiative.
- Consider other alternatives, including (and actually consider it, don't dismiss it with circular logic - yes, I've read the plans) Recognize watershed impacts of full build scenario (do you want the same to be boneyard part 2?)
- Let's forget project B - it's not needed at this time.
- Rep. Chopin Rose thinks projects like Olympian Drive can be dispersed until the state and nation are financially recovered. Both are bankrupt now and we have aggravated the situation whenever we undertake additional projects.
- Independent Needs assessment. Do we even have funds for such a project in current economic projections? No Guarantee jobs will go up.
- I marked above if project is pushed through. We are retired and on fixed income and honestly feel it will harm our county as far as productivity. We have lived in the area for 20 years and have gotten along fine with the roads we have. We don't want this project to proceed.