

6.0 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

6.1 Summary

A Public Open House was held on April 28, 2016 at the Orbital ATK Conference Center, 890 Ogden Canyon in Ogden, from 5 – 7 p.m. There were 220 attendees who signed in. The purpose of the open house was to present the study recommendations, show the process by which the recommendations were determined, and gather public comment.



ATK Conference Center

Outreach for the Open House

Approximately 1,325 postcard invitations were sent to the project area over two weeks in advance of the meeting. An email invitation was sent to 582 stakeholders close to two weeks in advance of the meeting. Email invitations were also sent to various organizations that were met with throughout Phase II. The project website was updated with the details about the open house. A press release was prepared and resulted in one news article.



Sign-in Table

Open House Event

At the open house, 24x36-inch display boards were arranged around the room. Attendees were able to review the boards and meet with project team members to ask questions and/or express input. Upon entering the open house, attendees were directed to sign in, handed a “Frequently Asked Questions” flier, and encouraged to leave a written comment at the open house or through the project website.

The following is a list of the exhibits including a brief summary of each one:

1. Purpose of the study – who called for the study and what was the overall purpose, including the general tasks accomplished during each phase
2. Stakeholders we’ve met with – list of stakeholders whom were met with during Phase I and II
3. Schedule – general tasks that were completed during Phase I and II presented in a table
4. Ideas that are not currently recommended – ideas that were considered but ruled out and reasons why they were excluded
5. Findings from Phase I: Public Opinion – More than 1,300 Comments – list of what commenters were most concerned with and what the majority of them want to see happen in the canyon
6. Findings from Phase I: Engineering and Environmental Analysis – statement that improvements are necessary and feasible. List of categories that were included in environmental data



7. Phase II Focus Groups – description of who participated, when they were held, and what their purpose was
8. Focus Group – Roadway – summary of what this focus group determined regarding design speed
9. Focus Group – Roadway – summary of what improvements were needed in order of priority
10. Focus Group – Active/Transit – summary of trail and shoulders recommendations
11. Focus Group – Environmental – summary of recommendations based on environmental impacts
12. Recommendations made by focus groups – final design speed and roadway improvement recommendations
13. Recommendations made by focus groups – final shared use trail recommendations
14. Next Steps – UDOT – description of what is needed from UDOT for project to move forward. List of upcoming UDOT projects in Ogden Canyon
15. Next Steps – Weber County – description of Weber County’s role in the future of the trail, items that need further analysis, and list of agencies to coordinate with further



Display Boards at the Open House



Discussing the recommendations



Resident reviewing the proposed roadway improvements

6.2 Comments Received

The Public Open House comment period ended on May 20, 2016. A press release was prepared to remind the public of the deadline but resulted in no known articles. An email blast was sent to 579 stakeholders to remind them of the end of the comment period. Approximately 80 comments were submitted (refer to Appendix B for the full text of all comments received).

Comments were separated into the following categories:

- Shared use trail
- Bicycles on the roadway
- Truck traffic
- Roadway widening
- Private property
- Speed limit and enforcement
- Safety
- Environment and aesthetics
- Other
- Alternative Suggestions and Specific Observations

Shared Use Trail

The shared use trail was the most referenced category – there were approximately 40 references, 35 of which were in favor of the shared use trail. Several comments mentioned a paved versus unpaved trail; however, there was not a consensus either way. An unpaved trail was acceptable to many, but a paved trail was preferred by others. The sentiment of those who commented on the trail was that it will be a great addition to the area for hiking, biking, and commuting.

“I think efforts to create a bicycle/walking/running path through the canyon [are] extremely important for our community. Thriving communities across the country have these, and communities without them want them. Such paths are a highly desirable feature for people and companies looking to relocate. Ogden is blessed with a good network and better potential that will help secure Weber County as a desirable place to live, work, & raise a family!”

Approximately five of the comments referencing the trail were opposed to it for the following reasons: close proximity to homes and backyards, trash, vandalism, security, maintenance, parking, lack of restroom facilities, and access to and from the trail across private property. One commenter was concerned that multi-use trails are dangerous due to high-speed cyclists and pedestrians sharing the trail. Others questioned whether UDOT had authority to study the trail. Some commenters were in favor of the trail as long as it did not significantly interfere with private property.

“We are not in favor of a trail in the canyon unless it is on the highway. Of course we don’t want it going through our backyard where it is proposed.”

Ogden River Water Users’ Association – an entity of Pineview Water Systems submitted a letter. The following is a portion of their letter regarding the shared use path (the entire letter can be found in Appendix B):

“The Association has agreed to consider the possibility of allowing a trail along the pipeline corridor but has a number of concerns and reservation. Among the concerns are:



- Dam and pipeline security
- Public parking at base of dam
- Fall protection along the corridor
- Rock, land, & debris fall protection
- Injury & death liability
- Maintenance responsibility
- Access around tunnels that contain the pipeline
- Low overhead powerlines
- Infrastructure vandalism
- Inadvertent damage to the pipeline and bridge structures
- Proximity of proposed trail to Ogden Canyon residents' homes and property
- Ingress & egress of the corridor

The preceding list is some and may not be all of the Association's concerns. Until all of the Association's concerns are sufficiently addressed to the satisfaction of the Association, a trail along the corridor will not be granted."

Bicycles on the Roadway

Approximately 18 comments referred to bicycles on the roadway. Nearly half of these felt strongly that bicycles should be kept off of the roadway for various reasons – cyclists going 15-20 mph create traffic back-up, safe passing is dangerous due to the narrow road, there are other trails available, and overall safety concerns. Some said at the very least to divert cyclists from the lower part of the canyon – while others felt it is too dangerous to have bike traffic merge from a shared use trail back onto SR-39. Suggestions were made on how to improve safety with cyclists such as prohibiting any passing, implementing a bike speed limit, and issuing tickets to cyclists who use the main roadway instead of the shoulder.

"To encourage more bikers in the canyon is just a recipe for disaster."

"Those of us who tow camp trailers, boats, and four wheelers through the canyon know how dangerous it can be. Motorcyclists can also attest to the danger. Add bikes to the mix and you invite disaster, not to mention the traffic slowdown which is unacceptable. There are plenty of other trails for bikers and walkers. "

Those in favor of bicycles in the canyon are excited for improvements to accommodate serious cyclists and increase safety and accessibility to Ogden Valley. Some commented on the importance of separating high-speed cyclists from pedestrians where possible, which would warrant widening the shoulder to encourage cyclists to use the shoulder instead of the shared use trail.

"I will continue to bike the canyon regardless of how safe it is."

"I am very much in support of adding a bike lane, up and down on SR-39. This will greatly improve Weber County's recreation opportunities and also improve the driving conditions on this roadway."

Truck Traffic

Nearly 15 commenters were not in favor of trucks and/or big trailers in the canyon due to trucks exceeding speed limits, drifting over the double lines, using air brakes, and knocking the concrete barriers into the river. Suggestions were given to decrease or eliminate these problems: limit large axle vehicles in the canyon, install surveillance cameras to monitor speed, install signs stating "Narrow Road and Shoulder, Vehicles over 8 ½ feet wide Prohibited Without Permit." Others were in favor of widening the shoulders and flattening the curves to help with the narrow road.

Roadway Widening

Comments submitted were on both sides of for and against widening the roadway. Proponents of the widening and/or curve straightening stated it would provide for better visibility and be safer for cyclists and pedestrians. Some were in favor only with minimal impacts to property owners. For those opposed, widening the road would cost too much, increase accidents on the road, and impact the canyon negatively – specifically above Alaskan Inn.

"Glad to see widening the dangerous areas as a safety feature."

"The Canyon is simply not wide enough to reconfigure the roadways or to narrow the roadways for the sake of a few cyclists."

Private Property

There were close to 20 comments that mentioned private property and "eminent domain." About half of those were strongly opposed to using private property, specifically canyon residents' property, for the use of a shared use trail. About five expressed discontent regarding the shared use path/trail (pipeline route) passing through residents' backyards.

"I don't like the proposals of utilizing my private properties for a trail system. I oppose the trails on my properties and don't think it is legal, fair, or right. I'm seeking legal counsel on the matter."

"The Pineview Water Pipeline runs through our property, they have an easement to maintain the pipeline. They do not have an easement to use it for a bike and hiking trail. We have private roads to and from our home, which we maintain. We will never give permission for this use. If there is to be a trail, it should be along the road, not through anyone's private property."



The other half voiced that consideration should be given to property owners and efforts should be made to find alternatives that works for both sides. This group wasn't opposed to the trail or widening, but they felt that property rights are more important than having a trail in the canyon.

"Respecting the property rights of these landowners is also important and we should endeavor to find solutions which would ameliorate the land owner's concerns."

There were a couple of commenters that felt a trail will never happen due to strong opposition from canyon residents and are not concerned with obtaining agreement from canyon residents with the shared use trail or roadway widening.

Speed Limit and Enforcement

Speed limit and enforcement was a topic referenced about 15 times. The majority of these commenters were not in favor of the higher speed limits of 40-45 mph. They encouraged keeping the speed limit as is or no more than 35 mph. Commenters expressed concern that speed limits will not be enforced and desire a better system of enforcement.

Safety

There were close to 15 comments regarding safety, however, there was no prevalent theme amongst the comments. Concerns included the following: bicycle safety, emergency access to hospital, crossing the road to access mailboxes, poor signage for cyclists, falling rocks, traffic build up, snow removal and poor visibility.

Environment and Aesthetics

A few commenters were glad that there was no recommendation to pipe the river. Others were concerned about the impact on wildlife, the river, and the mountainside, as well as increased noise.

"We therefore call for a full Environmental Impact Statement and public comment for any new projects that would impact Ogden Canyon, especially anything that would cut into the mountain or building into or on the Ogden River."

Other

There were several other topics that were commented on less frequently. Commenters inquired about better parking to access trails and climbing spots. Some were concerned about the potential for increased crime, while others questioned whether or not this project would be a good use of tax dollars. A few commenters were concerned that changing the canyon would impact the Scenic Byway designation for State Road 39.

Alternative Suggestions and Specific Observations

Several commenters provided alternative solutions (mostly about the trail) to the proposed recommendations, as well as observations about specific areas. The following is a list of some of those suggestions and observations:

- "How about a trail going up 21st street and over the mountain. Bikers and hikers can also drive to the valley and go from that destination."

- “Another thought: go through the bottom of North Ogden Canyon. It's a shorter route to the valley and makes more sense. No residents would be impacted through that canyon.”
- “Make use of the old trolley fill for bicycles.”
- “I would strongly urge UDOT and stakeholders to utilize existing Pineview Water and PacificCorp right of ways and easements to construct a paved trail the entire length of the canyon to Wheeler Creek...while not cheap I believe it would be less expensive and certainly less impact than widening HY 39.”
- “Please consider building this alignment for [the] trail in phases: from Ogden, build on north side of the river, cross it before Perry Camp Bridge, then stay north of road but cross near Indian Trail Head. Stay south of road until Grey Cliff Lodge where trail will go south of the river. Cross to north of the river and the road before the Hermitage, follow the pipeline until just before the houses near the ATK Conference Center. The trail will have to cross the river anyway, so why not do so before the ATK CC. From there, just stay south of the road to connect to the Wheeler Creek Trail. The parking there should also be expanded because it is often full.”
- “The specific plans you displayed at the open house / online suggested a couple route plans. Our attending canyon residents talked about the failure to see our suggested / presented routes that were a result of the collaboration of some residents who worked out options or solutions to the difficulties related to property access.”
- “As for the ‘Narrows’ area, the old Transit line works up to Peery Camp where I believe Ogden owns the land, and then crossing the Ogden River to respect property where it would become a shoulder route up to Pineview. This plan should have a paved trail that would support road bike travel (we CAN NOT ride on rocky gravel). Your plan should be considerate of the road bikes as primary or I can't re-enter the canyon once I leave downhill with traffic. Mountain bikes can travel on either type surface.”
- “I noticed your research has overlooked and incorrectly published a trail plan that isn't consistent with the factual conditions just west of ‘The Oaks’ in 2 cases.
 - 1) About 300 ft. west of the oaks heading west on HWY 39, the north side of the road is restricted by 2 large rock outcroppings situated vertically below the 72" waterline encased overhead. I suspect this outcropping remains due to the waterline, however, you show a 6 ft. wide shoulder improvement through this rock? This is the narrowest lane area and is the most dangerous area east of the Narrows. Directly across the highway is the Ogden River and a vertical drop wall, eliminating a shoulder improvement area.
 - 2) Same area, your map showed "Unpaved Trail" which in theory followed the 72" pipeline. Are you aware that the pipeline west of "The Oaks" leaves the historical route and dives under HWY39 due to a catastrophic landslide that destroyed the stave pipeline (still there)? That area currently is nearly impossible to hike across due to the sharp slope angles and lack of ground. Are you

proposing to bridge this unstable area? Site is located across from 882 Ogden Canyon above the boulders and group of cut off telephone poles (clearly visible) north side of road.