

**East-West Corridor Project
Final Alignment Alternatives Study**

**Appendix J
Responses to Public Comments**

RESPONSES TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Below are the County's responses to written comments received on comment forms during and after Open Houses Nos. 1 and 2 as well as written public comments received on the project web site.

Written Comments Received During and After Open House No. 1

Responses to the "Other" comments listed under the question "What is your major interest in this project?"

Comment: What is the real reason?

Response: No response. Comment is not clear.

Comment: Get it completed and develop Boise Cascade.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Include an efficient non-motorized design.

Response: Non-motorized uses are being considered in the design.

Comment: Concern. A greenway path east of river.

Response: Such a trail would be a separate project from the East West corridor, but if such a trail is developed, the pedestrian and bicycle facilities of the East-West corridor can be modified to connect to it.

Comment: Please create greenway size path and hook-up.

Response: It is the County's goal to connect the existing greenway west of the river with the pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the east west corridor.

Responses to the "Other" comments listed under the question "What do you consider the advantages of a new East-West travel route?"

Comment: Great for tax base and business.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Opportunity to extend greenway path into the Terrace Heights community.

Response: It is the County's goal to connect the existing greenway west of the river with the pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the east west corridor.

Comment: Better access from Yakima.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: If you want to improve E-W travel, provide public transportation.

Response: Providing public transportation on this or any other corridor is a decision that would need to be made by the transit authorities.

Comment: Better access to greenway.

Response: It is the County's goal to connect the existing greenway west of the river with the pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the east west corridor.

Comment: More traffic on 33rd.

Response: Comment noted, although not sure if this was meant as an advantage or a disadvantage.

Responses to the "Other" comments listed under the question "What do you consider the major disadvantages of a new East-West travel route?"

Comment: Noise, road noise, and air quality.

Response: Impacts from noise and air pollution will be addressed during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental review phase of this project and they will be mitigated as required by law.

Comment: A greenway path next to my property.

Response: Property impacts will be addressed during the NEPA environmental review phase of this project and they will be mitigated as required by "The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970" (Uniform Act).

Comment: Displacing too many homeowners is wrong. Choose the least disruptive route to homes and environment.

Response: It is the County's goal to minimize Property impacts and residential displacements, but they are not the only issues that the County has to be concerned with. Where property impacts and residential displacements do occur, they will be addressed during the NEPA environmental review phase of this project and they will be mitigated as required by the Uniform Act.

Comment: Expensive and destructive (solution) to a simple problem.

Response: No response. Not clear what you consider the "simple problem" to be.

Comment: Moving crime from Yakima to Terrace Heights.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Reduces economic incentives for transit and promotes SOVs.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Get it started.

Response: Comment noted.

Responses to General Comments

Comment: Please let me know how to help research and volunteer should a greenway hook-up be incorporated.

Response: As the environmental review and design phases proceed, there will be several more opportunities for public input, including input on any connections to the Greenway.

Comment: If Cutoff Road is used as a connecting road, the widening of it will affect my property/pool as well a cost* to me. We are concerned about the noise, security, privacy, and peacefulness of our neighborhood. Use of the hills would be the least impact – future use. *re-fencing, re-landscaping, etc.

Response: It is the County's goal to minimize Property impacts and residential displacements, but they are not the only issues that the County has to be concerned with. Where property impacts and residential displacements do occur, they will be addressed during the NEPA environmental review phase of this project and they will be mitigated as required by the Uniform Act.

Comment: If they use Cutoff as an arterial, it will take away a usable building lot. Will have to put up trees or fence and lose my good old trees. The traffic is bad enough now and would be unbearable then. The future is in the hills behind Terrace Heights. Plan the road for that.

Response: It is the County's goal to minimize Property impacts and residential displacements, but they are not the only issues that the County has to be concerned with. Where property impacts and residential displacements do occur, they will be addressed during the NEPA environmental review phase of this project and they will be mitigated as required by the Uniform Act.

Comment: I like the most northern route.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Projection of 2% increase in economic growth as in past might not be applicable in the new "world economy". This road might not be needed for a very long time, if ever. Even now, records are inaccurate and made to look better than actual.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: This is very destructive. It is NOT forward-thinking. Please explore rapid transit or public transportation. This E-W corridor is crazy thinking.

Response: Comment noted. Providing public transportation on this or any other corridor is a decision that would need to be made by the transit authorities.

Comment: Would like a copy of routes. What utilities are available if it goes close to my house? My garage is bigger and nicer than my house. How do I get that counted rather than out building?

Response: The routes are available on the website <http://www.yakimaeastwestcorridor.com>
The utilities to be included will be determined during later design phases. If the chosen project alignment requires your home to be purchased by the County, compensation will be determined under the Uniform Act. Under this law, the value of your property and home will be determined by a professional appraiser. If you disagree with the appraisal, you may counter with your own appraisal. The cost of your appraisal will be at least partially compensated for by the County.

Comment: Bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides of street are good and will allow/promote commuting. Design safe and efficient connection between pathway on bridge and bicycle lanes on street. Consider locating pathway on south side of bridge to enable future connection with possible pathway on railroad right-of-way in case of abandonment trail banking.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: It is a great idea for all of Yakima and Terrace Heights. Boise Cascade is a great property. Start buying the rights-of-way.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Don't forget improvements to N. 33rd Street. It is already busy and this will only make it worse.

Response: Improvements to streets projected to have traffic increases of 10% or more due to this project will be considered during the NEPA environmental review phase of this project.

Comment: We enjoy the quiet and privacy of our "dead end" lane, and do not want to be relocated nor have an increase in noise and air pollution. Two of the alignments go through our house or our neighborhood. We would like a copy of the map.

Response: The map is available on the website <http://www.yakimaeastwestcorridor.com>
Impacts to properties and neighborhoods as well as noise and air pollution impacts will be addressed during the environmental review phase of the project and will be mitigated as required by law.

Comment: If you go through Skyline Trailer Court, a lot of elderly people will be affected. They will have a difficult time with the physical move and finances will hit them hard.

Response: These impacts will be addressed under the Uniform Act and will also be considered under the environmental justice portion of the NEPA review.

Comment: The proposed routes do not directly affect my property, but feeder routes could affect my travel. Some improvements may need to be made to Butterfield Road or other roads in area so safety is not compromised for pedestrians and drivers entering or leaving the major travel routes.

Response: Improvements to streets projected to have traffic increases of 10% or more due to this project will be considered during the NEPA environmental review phase of this project.

Comment: Have reservations about location of bridge over Yakima River. What is happening with bicycle and walking lanes? Is Yakima County promoting bus service versus one person per car?

Response: No response on reservations over the bridge location as it is unclear what those reservations are. Bicycle and walking lanes are being considered for inclusion in this project. Providing public transportation on this or any other corridor is a decision that would need to be made by the transit authorities.

Comment: There is already a need for this project. It needs to happen sooner and faster.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Please consider greenway hook-up and bicycles.

Response: They are being considered.

Written Comments Received During and After Open House No. 2

Responses to General Comments

Comment: I prefer Ridge Top #1 route for the proposed east-west corridor. It is the least invasive toward property owners but yet still is an efficient route to move traffic. It also has the potential for new property development along the route. It will serve both new housing, businesses, and possible recreation sites.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: My preference is Corridor 1 which would probably impact fewer people. The lowlands route would again decrease quality of life, view, and increase noise. Property values would definitely decrease w/that plan.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Alternative 4 goes right through my house. It looks like Alternative 1 would be the least disruptive.

Response: Comment noted.

Written Comments Received on the Project Web Site

Responses to General Comments

Comment: One good thing about this project you have planned is I have been able to meet and interact with my neighbors because of this, and that is appreciated. Their views and suggestions are valuable. I would like to have the additional opportunity to view their thoughts and comments on the potential impact to our community, concerning the possible corridor chosen, and perhaps ideas on how to pay for the project, added to this page. I'm sure the people of our community would appreciate it. Thank you in advance for adding this feature to your web site.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: I would like to see a traffic study done on N 33Rd ST before and after the connection to the new road.

Response: A traffic study will be done during the NEPA environmental review phase of this project.

Comment: Alternative route 4 goes right through my house. I am 67 years old and have lived in this house for over 35 years. No amount of money can compensate me for the loss of this home. This fertile river bottom land is the soil we need for growing our food. The ridge top would be a much more appropriate place for a road. I was told at the meeting this week that they can't widen the existing Terrace Drive because they can't take the property of a business corridor. This business corridor land has already been paved over and destroyed, so it would also be more appropriate for a road.

Response: Comment noted.

Comment: Consider the inevitable result that eventually there will be no more space for roads. Any chance for being more proactive on public transportation instead of waiting until we are flush with road rage and gridlock? Please don't forget bike lanes on whichever option you choose.

Response: Providing public transportation on this or any other corridor is a decision that would need to be made by the transit authorities. It is the County's goal to include bike lanes on this project.

Comment: The further south you place the corridor, the less sense it makes. The (future) upper Terrace Heights Residents will still need to dip down into lower T.Hts. to exit to the West side. (What's the point of all that expense and kaos?) I thought this was to be an alternative route to lessen the stress of traffic to current roadways and communities. The Nob Hill corridor is a considerable distance from Terrace Heights Drive, which makes sense. Shouldn't that same logic apply to the distance between the new corridor and Terrace Heights Drive?

Response: The distance between the corridors is one of the many criteria that will be used to evaluate the preferred corridor, with the greater separation scoring higher for the reasons you've stated.

Comment: Your team has approached this project with due diligence and from an engineering standpoint it seems quite professional. But where these neatly drawn lines on your maps intersect existing houses and established neighborhoods this is no longer just an engineering project. These are real peoples' homes, dreams and in many cases life savings that are threatened.

Of the four proposed routes for this project, one (# 3) goes through our property destroying our home of 25+ years. Bad as this is, it would actually be preferable to route # 2 which goes right alongside us to the East – devaluing our property and ruining our quality of life. Route # 4 is only slightly better for us but manages to trash our neighborhood and displace one of the pioneering families of this area. On the other hand, by transitioning the hillside higher up across mostly undeveloped land, route # 1, harms the fewest people and may actually increase the value of those properties on the hillside by greatly improving their access.

Although route # 1, may be the most challenging from an engineering perspective and possibly the most expensive, these drawbacks pale in comparison to the disruption and harm that will surely result from building any of the three lower routes. Unless the county is prepared to require the same sacrifice from all who will benefit from this project, to select routes 2, 3 or 4 because of possible cost savings is morally indefensible.

Make no mistake, even if route 1 is chosen, some of us will still be subjected to increased noise and light pollution – well beyond what would be generated by gradual residential development. We always envisioned houses being built on the hillside above us but not a major 4-lane arterial. Presumably this project is being driven by large new and planned developments such as Terrace Estates. Many of us in this neighborhood were living here when Terrace Estates consisted of 2 or 3 houses. There would seem to be an inherent unfairness for us to bear the brunt of this project's negatives while the newcomers in these developments enjoy all the benefits without any of the sacrifices. Also, by facilitating more of these developments, how long will it be before our wells in this area go dry?

By going public with these plans the county has essentially frozen our assets – rendering our properties virtually unsalable. No one but a speculator would buy property under such a cloud – and then only for pennies on the dollar. In addition, this “sword of Damocles” will hang over our heads until the final route is chosen. Any projects/improvements we had planned will have to be placed on hold for at least a year. It has been suggested that if they stuck a gun to our heads and threatened our life savings it would be quicker and we might even have a chance to fight back. Admittedly, most people might find this illustration to be a bit extreme but it begins to capture some of the fear and frustration generated by this project. Life is challenging enough without something like this thrust upon us.

This holiday season as family and loved ones gathered in our homes, we were also forced to entertain an unwanted guest -- the nagging question in the back of our minds – Will this be the last time? – Will our homes be gone next year or the one after that etc.

Please carefully consider the following question and let your decisions be guided by your honest response to it. Would you like this project to be built through YOUR neighborhood – adjacent to or through YOUR property?

Response: It is the County's goal to minimize property impacts and residential displacements, but they are not the only issues that the County has to be concerned with. Where property impacts and residential displacements do occur, they will be addressed during the NEPA environmental review phase of this project and they will be mitigated as required by the Uniform Act.