

5 AGENCY COORDINATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5.1 AGENCY COORDINATION

As part of the planning process for the Oregon Avenue Final EA, DDOT conducted an agency coordination program. This coordination included project scoping, consultation with resource agencies in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), consultation with the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office (DC SHPO) and NPS in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), individual meetings, and a public hearing following completion of the EA. Agency scoping and Section 106 correspondence is included in Appendices N and O.

AGENCY SCOPING

DDOT and FHWA held an Agency Scoping Meeting on October 21, 2010. Agencies in attendance included NPS, DC Water, District Department of the Environment (DDOE), DC Office of Planning (DCOP), and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). The purpose of the meeting was to provide federal and local agencies with an overview of the proposed project as well as solicit their initial thoughts on issues, concerns, and resources within the study area. Early coordination was also conducted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

AGENCY ALTERNATIVES MEETING

DDOT and FHWA held an Agency Alternatives Meeting on December 1, 2010 to update federal and local agencies on the study's process and to solicit their input for concept improvements / preliminary alternatives. Agencies in attendance included NPS, DC Water, DDOE, DCOP, NCPC, and the DC SHPO. Agency representatives helped construct preliminary alternatives (concepts) by incorporating various improvement elements including roadway segments, bike lanes, sidewalks, and stormwater management facilities (e.g., curb, swales and rain gardens). Concepts developed by agency representatives are illustrated in **Appendix A**. See Section 2.1 for further details on the concept development process.

DC STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

The Section 106 process of the NHPA was initiated with the DC SHPO on August 11, 2010. DDOT met with the DC SHPO on December 8, 2010 to define the Area of Potential Effects (APE). During the meeting, DC SHPO was provided an overview of the Oregon Avenue project and informed that DDOT's objective was to stay within the existing right-of-way.

DC SHPO helped identify cultural resources in the project area including: a culvert at Pinehurst Run (DDOT-owned, however, it may have been originally owned/constructed by the US Army Corp of Engineers); NPS Rock Creek Park boundary markers (both modern and historic);

concrete post and metal cable guard rails; a brick manhole; concrete wing walls (a water channeling feature); and several archaeological sites in the adjacent Rock Creek Park.

In delineating the APE, factors taken into account included the elements of the proposed action; the existence of buildings, vegetation, and terrain; possible visual concerns in terms of changes to viewshed caused by roadway modifications; audible impacts; and construction activities necessary for the proposed action.

The APE for archeological resources for the Oregon Avenue improvements is basically defined as 50 feet east of the existing right-of-way line on the east side of the road, with the exception of six areas, and the existing right-of-way line on the west side of Oregon Avenue, with the exception of two areas. On the east side, the APE was extended an additional 50 feet by 100 feet (approximately) at each of the six outfall locations. On the west side, at the Pinehurst Run area, the APE was extended an additional 50 feet west of the existing right-of-way and at the intersection with Nebraska Avenue, the APE was expanded to include the recently reconfigured traffic island. The 50-foot wide corridor along the length of the project area east of the existing right-of-way line is NPS land in Rock Creek Park. This APE is considered sufficient to include all proposed repairs or modifications to the seven existing outfalls (six on the east side and one on the west), to incorporate any possible construction staging areas on the east side of the road, and to accommodate any modifications and/or replacement of the box culvert carrying Oregon Avenue over Pinehurst Run that may involve ground disturbing activities. A letter requesting formal concurrence with the APE was sent to the DC SHPO on December 21, 2010.

A teleconference was held with DC SHPO on February 22, 2011 to follow-up on project activities. DC SHPO recommended expanding the APE to the west to include residences facing Oregon Avenue as well as Knollwood. This expanded APE was intended to account for potential visual and audible intrusions to these properties. Revised APE mapping was prepared and submitted to the DC SHPO for concurrence on March 9, 2011. DC SHPO expanded a portion of this revised APE and DDOT concurred with the revision on March 17, 2011. Surveys and impact assessments included in this EA were based on the revised APE. A map of the APE is provided in **Appendix E**.

JOINT AGENCY PROGRESS MEETINGS

During the course of project planning and NEPA evaluations, DDOT and FHWA conducted a series of regularly scheduled meetings with the NPS and DDOE to ensure continuous input from these two agencies. Each agency provided extensive information on existing conditions within the project area and helped coordinate the roadway improvement with on-going improvements in Rock Creek Park – most notably stormwater management and stream restoration activities.

5.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

DDOT held two public meetings and a public hearing to help inform as well as solicit input from the general public on the proposed project. Numerous methods were employed to publicize the public meetings, including newspaper advertisements in *The Current Newspapers* and *El Tiempo Latino* and announcements on the project website at www.OregonAve.com

(**Appendix J**). Postings were also made to the surrounding communities' and Advisory Neighborhood Commission's (ANC) listservs and announcements were mailed to adjacent property owners.

DDOT held a Public Scoping Meeting at the Chevy Chase Community Center, 5601 Connecticut Avenue, NW in Washington, DC on October 28, 2010 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The purpose of the open house meeting was to introduce the project and to provide all interested persons the opportunity to provide comments regarding the project. Maps, displays, and background information were available for review at the meeting. Forty-four (44) citizens signed in at the meeting. Written comments were submitted by nine (9) individuals who attended the meeting and a verbatim reporter documented verbal comments from thirteen (13) citizens.

DDOT held a Public Meeting at the same location on December 2, 2010 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The purpose of this second public meeting was to provide an update on study activities and to afford interested persons an opportunity to provide input towards the development of improvements being considered for the project. Various engineering concepts for reconstruction of the roadway, stormwater management systems, sidewalks, and bikeways were reviewed and discussed at the meeting. Meeting participants were encouraged to provide comments on the design concepts and to work with study team members in creating improvement concepts (employing the same concept building tools used at the Agency Alternatives meeting). Concepts developed by the meeting participants are illustrated in **Appendix A**). Of the citizens who attended the meeting, 33 signed in. Written comments were submitted by four (4) individuals at the meeting and a verbatim reporter documented verbal comments from three (3) meeting attendees.

DDOT held a Public Hearing at the same location on June 29, 2011 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The purpose of the public hearing was to provide information and receive comments about the proposed project and the May 2011 EA. Maps, displays, and copies of the EA were available at the public hearing, and members of the project team were on hand to discuss the project and answer questions. In addition, a presentation was given to provide background on the project (see **Appendix G**, which includes the transcript for the presentation). Of the citizens who attended the hearing, fifty-seven (57) signed in. Both oral (via public testimony) and written statements were taken at the public hearing. A verbatim reporter documented public testimony from twenty-seven meeting attendees (**Appendix G**). Written comments were submitted by five (5) agencies (**Appendix F**); eight (8) organizations (**Appendix H**); and 370 individuals or couples (**Appendix I**) at the meeting and during the designated comment period (through July 9, 2011) and subsequent extension, which ended on August 29, 2011.

No requests for special assistance or translations were received prior to the meetings. Meeting handouts were available in English and Spanish at all public meetings and the hearing.

Throughout the study, DDOT provided a project website that detailed the project history and current activities associated with the proposed Oregon Avenue EA study. The website provided the public with continuous opportunity to provide comments via e-mail to OregonEA@parsons.com.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

The following is a summary of the comments received prior to the Public Scoping Meeting via e-mail (6 e-mails); at the meeting by way of written (9) and oral (13) comments; and in e-mails immediately following the meeting (4 e-mails):

COMMENT	NUMBER OF COMMENTS (IF MORE THAN 1)
Construct storm drains or implement other means to collect stormwater runoff	20
Provide sidewalks along Oregon Avenue	20
Make the roadway safer for pedestrians	7
Repave and rehabilitate roadway	4
Remove debris and garbage along Rock Creek Park side of roadway	3
Do not provide sidewalks along Oregon Avenue	3
Reduce speed of traffic	3
Install curb and gutter along the roadway	2
Repair both the roadway and bridge at Beech Street	2
Bury all utility lines	2
Concerned about high volume of traffic on roadway	2
Evaluate impact of runoff on historic properties within Rock Creek Park.	
Improve lighting	
Repair Pinehurst Creek Bridge	
Provide more stop signs along the roadway	
Remove stop signs along the roadway	
Remove emergency snow route designation	
Provide parking along roadway	
Speeding is not a concern – no speed bumps	
Improve signage at Nebraska Avenue/Bingham Drive intersection	
Provide bike lanes	

The following is a summary of the written (4) and oral (3) comments received at the December 2, 2010 Alternatives Public Meeting and the e-mails received following the meeting (6 e-mails):

COMMENT	NUMBER OF COMMENTS (IF MORE THAN 1)
Correct drainage problems	7
Make the roadway safer for bicyclists and pedestrians	4
Opposed to sidewalks on either side of Oregon Avenue	4
Provide sidewalks along Oregon Avenue	3
Repave and rehabilitate roadway	3
Opposed to taking lands to widen traffic lanes	
Opposed to bike lanes	
Concern over lengthy construction period and impacts associated with noise and construction vehicle traffic	

COMMENT	NUMBER OF COMMENTS (IF MORE THAN 1)
Provide aesthetically-pleasing curbs	
Implement traffic calming methods to control speeding	
Improve bicycle and pedestrian safety – including dedicated bikeways and sidewalks	
Add a crosswalk at Nebraska Avenue and Bingham Drive	
Convert some of the trails to bike paths	
Consider long-term solutions	
Eliminate stop signs and widen roadway at congested locations, i.e., Oregon Avenue/Military Road	
Mixed opinions on the study schedule – some indicated it is moving too fast while others suggest it is too slow	

The following is a summary of the more than one-thousand written and oral comments by general topic received at the June 29, 2011 Public Hearing and e-mails and correspondence received following the meeting. For each topic, examples of the types of comments are presented.

- **Project Design** (e.g., do not create an Urban Thoroughfare; do not move, straighten or flatten the road; do not widen the road; maintain current road footprint; do not increase impervious surfaces; bury the overhead utility lines)
- **Project Cost** (e.g. this project costs too much; spend the funding elsewhere in the city)
- **Stormwater Issues** (e.g., do not construct a drainage swale; address uphill drainage runoff; install curb and gutters; do not install curb and gutters)
- **Traffic Calming** (e.g., reduce the speed of traffic; do not construct speed bumps; add stop signs; do not add stop signs)
- **Pinehurst Run Bridge** (e.g., repair or replace the bridge)
- **Sidewalks** (e.g., provide sidewalks; do not provide sidewalks; do not meander sidewalks around existing trees; construct sidewalks with pervious materials)
- **Bike Lanes** (e.g., provide bike lanes; do not provide bike lanes)
- **Safety** (e.g. provide crosswalks; how to prevent deer/vehicle crashes)
- **Trees** (e.g., do not remove trees; do not remove mature trees; what compensation will occur for tree loss; what is the cost of tree removal)
- **Retaining Walls** (e.g., do not add retaining walls)
- **Lighting** (e.g., do not upgrade existing lighting; do not change the rural ambience with bright lights)

- **Use of DDOT owned right-of-way**(e.g., provide off street parking along roadway; do not remove vegetation from right-of-way; do not remove portions of driveways in right-of-way)
- **Public Outreach** (e.g., provide additional time for review of the EA; provide an opportunity for public input on road design)
- **Project Disruption** (e.g., re-routing buses during construction will be disruptive to the neighborhood; detours during road construction will be disruptive to the neighborhood)

Copies of all 1,079 comments received at the public hearing and during the comment period for the EA, which extended from the release of the EA on June 13, 2011 to August 29, 2011, and responses to the comments are included in **Appendices F through I**.