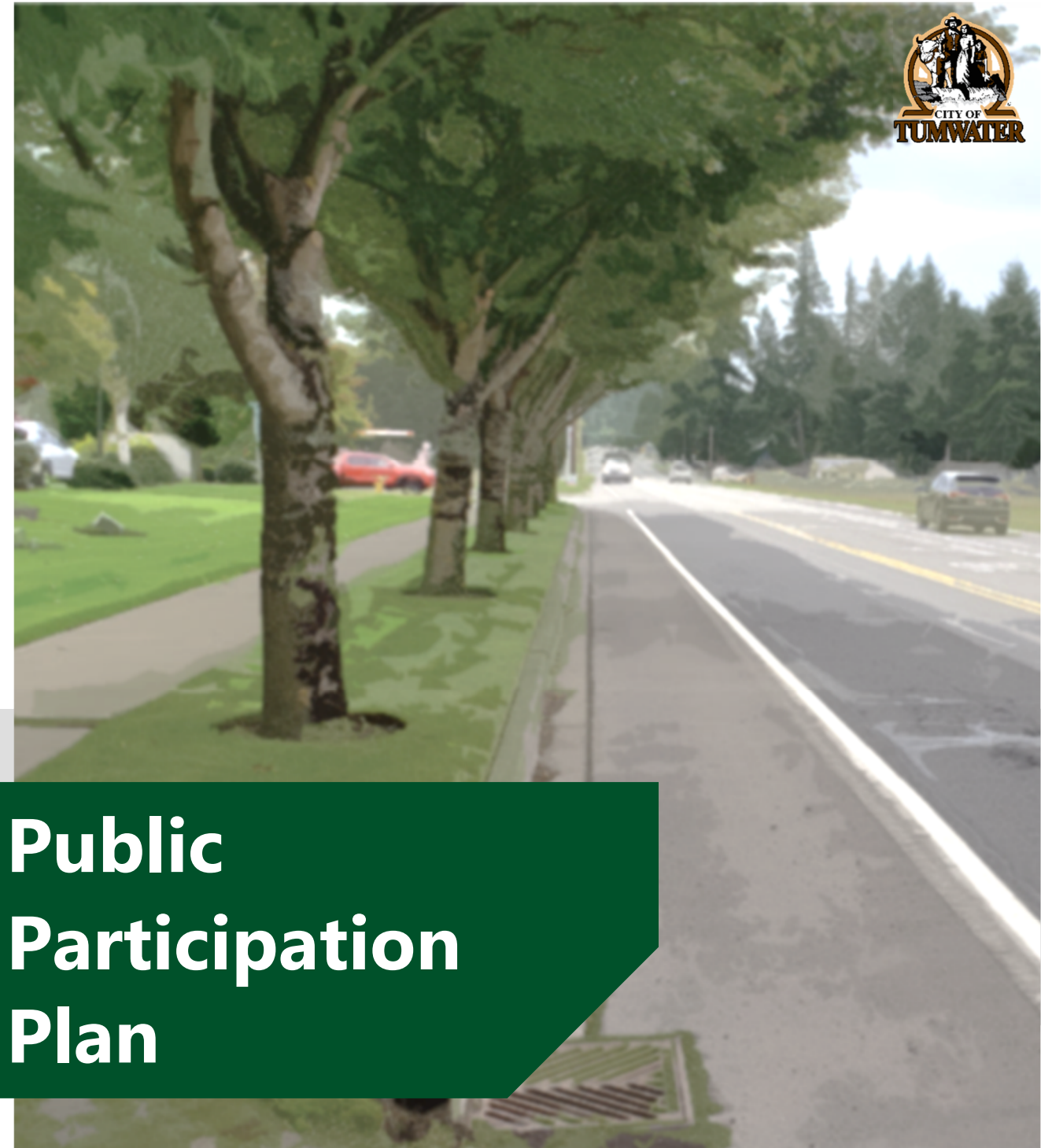


**APPENDIX C**  
**- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**





# Public Participation Plan

City of Tumwater | Old Highway 99 Corridor Study (2020)

## Introduction

Old Highway 99 was first assigned in the mid-1920s as the original north-south highway running along the West Coast of the United States. Extending from Blaine, Washington in the north to its southern terminus in Calexico, California, it ran 1,600 miles border to border.

In Washington State, this corridor spurred growth and commerce for more than 40 different communities as goods and travelers were able to quickly navigate from one city to the next. While this route has since lost many of its once daily travelers to Interstate 5 (I-5), the corridor still offers an identity that is closely linked to many of these early west coast cities. In recent years, many of these communities have invested in the revitalization of this route through main street projects, placemaking efforts and expanded boulevards.

At the local level, Old Highway 99 connects south Thurston County, Bush Prairie and the Olympia Regional Airport to the City of Tumwater and Interstate 5. Commercial and residential use levels have crept upwards in recent years, extending rush hours and lengthening vehicle queues.

Currently, there are no bike lanes along this stretch of the corridor and sidewalks are relegated to highly segmented portions connected to new construction. Pedestrians and bikes end up using the shoulder which is as narrow as 2 feet in some locations. With minimal lighting, this becomes especially challenging in the early and later hours of the day as non-motorized travel mixes with vehicle commuters and freight shipments.

## Who

The City of Tumwater has received grant funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through support from the Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to develop safety and mobility strategies to fit in with the surrounding uses while providing for solutions to local and regional commuters, pedestrians, bikes, and freight.

This effort is intended to be completed in close collaboration and participation from local businesses, residents and property owners, tenants, various other stakeholders, and the general public.

## What

The study will focus on validating previous traffic information to help inform decision making and strategize development. This stretch of Old Highway 99 also cuts through known Mazama Pocket gopher habitat which is a federally listed species and in close proximity to the Jack Davis Garry Oak Tree. Environmental reports will cover these topics and other environmental factors that will further inform the development of a corridor strategy.

The main goal of the study will be to advance design (intersections, cross-section, stormwater, etc.) and environmental documentation far enough to determine the following:

- Future right-of-way needs (areas and cost).
- Strategies to phase construction projects.
- Estimates for Mazama Pocket Gopher habitat credits per phased project.

## Where

For the purposes of this planning effort, the project boundaries run along Old Highway 99 from 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to the southern boundary of the Urban Growth Area at 93<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. Neighboring parcels and street approaches will also be included within the evaluation and planning process.

## When and How

Transportation touches everyone's daily life in some way. As a result, people tend to have a lot of interest, big ideas, and strong opinions when it comes to corridor development. A successful engagement process harnesses that energy and inspires community ownership, while adapting to new insights and feedback.

Stakeholders and community members supply the local knowledge, context, and information necessary to make informed project decisions. Early and often engagement of the residents and businesses who regularly use and depend on Old Highway 99 will be a key factor in the success of this project. This starts with the Public Participation Plan where we identify steps to ensure project transparency, open communication and multiple opportunities for feedback and collaboration.

- 1. Virtual Public Workshop:** As a major transportation corridor within Thurston County, thousands of travelers and goods are funneled through this section of Old Highway 99 on a daily basis. It is important that experiences and expectations of these travelers are reflected in the decisions and outcomes of this project.
  - **Action:** A virtual workshop for the project corridor will be developed to offer community members an opportunity to learn about the project goals and provide location-based insights, pinpoint concerns, share ideas, upload images, and discuss topics with neighbors and other corridor users about the spaces they know and value.
  - **Format:** Opportunities to access, navigate, and participate within this virtual workshop will be distributed publicly across social media platforms, the City of Tumwater website, and other city communication channels (email, utility flyers, project website, etc.) The virtual public workshop will be accessible from any internet connected device.
  - **Timeline:** The virtual workshop will start in September 2020 and run through the end of October 2020. This timeline is intended to reduce as many barriers as possible by offering 24-hour availability and in-home access in a format that is flexible to community schedules.
  - **Outcome:** After this phase of outreach has concluded, submitted comments will be reviewed for similarities and new perspectives that can better inform and drive project tasks. Project alternatives and opportunities will then be evaluated based on community input and support.
- 2. Project Specific Webpage:** In support of these outreach efforts, a project specific webpage will be developed as the primary information hub for updates, ongoing efforts, and project milestones.
  - **Action:** The webpage will provide an additional level of project transparency as project documents, contact information, opportunities for participation, and next steps will all be published and made publicly available.

- **Format:** The project webpage will be linked and accessible through the City of Tumwater website, with easy navigation and opportunities to provide comments and contact project leads.
  - **Timeline:** The webpage will be released and promoted early in the project, allowing visitors to become familiar with the site, learn about the project phases, and identify opportunities for participation.
  - **Outcome:** The webpage will ensure transparency throughout the project; providing timely updates; open communication channels, project milestones, and an opportunity to join the mailing list.
3. **Key Stakeholder Outreach/Informational Interviews:** Multiple agencies depend on this section of Old Highway 99 for continued operations and network access. These agencies have a unique understanding of this corridor as it represents a primary link within their daily activities and needs. Target stakeholders within this phase include Intercity Transit, Thurston Regional Planning Council, Thurston County, the Port of Olympia, Tumwater Emergency Services, Tumwater School District, and the Tumwater Traffic Team.
- **Action:** A targeted outreach effort will be made to hear directly from each of these stakeholder groups; giving them an opportunity to identify any initial thoughts, needs, and concerns, while offering an opportunity for open dialog with the project team. One of the objectives of this phase is to identify site-specific details that may get overlooked at later stages in the process.
  - **Format:** Outreach within this phase will primarily take place via email or telephone depending on stakeholder preferences and available resources.
  - **Timeline:** This phase of outreach is intended to run concurrently with alternative development and refinement following feedback collected within previous phases of outreach. The goal is to have these informational interviews completed as early as possible to best inform project tasks and alternatives analysis.
  - **Outcome:** Once this phase of outreach has been completed, a summary document of frequently asked questions will be made available to the greater public via the project page.
4. **Virtual Project Open House:** Following the insights and ideas gathered throughout this process, a preliminary design will be developed for the corridor. To ensure these designs reflect the expectations of the community, a virtual project open house will be held in early 2021.
- **Action:** The recommended preliminary corridor design will be shared publicly and distributed to the project webpage and mailing lists.
  - **Format:** The virtual open house will offer interested community members an opportunity to review the preliminary designs and provide feedback to the project team.
  - **Timeline:** The open house will be held in early 2021.
  - **Outcome:** The project team will use the collected input to refine the project into a final design.
5. **City Council Briefings:** To ensure the project is reflective of City goals and community insights, Councilmembers will receive updates on project findings, milestones, and alternatives.

- **Action:** City Council will receive project briefings at two public meetings to review project materials, progress, and recommendations.
- **Format:** Council briefings will take place at two regularly scheduled public meetings. Face to face video presentations from the project leads will promote clarity and open dialogue.
- **Timeline:** Two Council briefings are currently scheduled. The first will take place near the project’s midpoint to update the Council on project milestones, findings, and initial renderings. The second briefing will take place near the project’s conclusion with refined renderings, deliverables, insights from the community.
- **Outcome:** The intent of this phase is to ensure Councilmembers are well informed and have multiple opportunities to provide targeted guidance to the project leads.

## COVID-19

Given the ongoing and variable health risks associated with in person communication, all outreach efforts have been developed for online or telephone-based communication channels. If public gatherings and in person conversations are deemed safe by licensed state health practitioners before the completion of this project, the public participation plan may be revisited.