

MIDTOWN CROSSINGS PROJECT

HAWTHORNE OVERCROSSING OPEN HOUSE

Public Feedback Summary July 2024

Prepared for:

City of Bend



CITY OF BEND

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OVERVIEW

The Hawthorne Overcrossing open house offered the community a chance to provide input on plans for a brand-new bridge for people walking and biking on Hawthorne Avenue. The project team shared four bridge structure types with the public: Cable Stayed-Two Tower, Cable Stayed-One Tower, Extradosed and Truss. Attendees were asked to share their preferred bridge type, and which priorities they considered most important to the decision. Factors like cost, aesthetics, and construction impact were presented. Additionally, community members weighed in on the potential closure of the Parkway exit at Hawthorne Ave based on safety considerations.

The Hawthorne Overcrossing open house is part of the Midtown Crossings Project, which is focused on developing safer travel for all users on four key corridors in the city of Bend: Greenwood Avenue, Franklin Avenue, Hawthorne Avenue and Second Street.

Outreach Activities and Participation

Outreach activities for this phase of the project included:

- **July 3 through July 17** – Online open house
 - **351 people** submitted the survey form
- **July 10** – In-person open house at Campfire Hotel's meeting room
 - Approximately **80 people attended**, 45 submitted comment forms

All information and questions provided at the in-person event were replicated in the online event. Two people submitted responses via email. The Hawthorne Overcrossing open houses had approximately 435 people participate with 398 submitting responses.



The online and in-person open houses were available in English and Spanish. No responses were received online in Spanish. One person at the event provided comments in Spanish.

Promotion

To promote the project and the open house, the following communications were completed:

- **Postcard:** mailed to the project area of 4,785 addresses
- **Email:** sent to the project mailing list of 1,193 subscribers with a 45% open rate
- **Website update**
- **Press release:** submitted on July 2, 2024
- **Social media posts:** on July 8
 - Facebook: 1k reached, 12 reactions, 0 comments and 1 share
 - Instagram 1.3k reached, 18 likes, 0 comments and 4 shares

Key Takeaways

The Hawthorne Overcrossing Open Houses engaged over 400 community members and received 398 responses through an in-person event and online survey. We found the main takeaways from community participants were:

The **Truss bridge type received the most support** from the public (167), with the **Extradosed bridge type a close second** (132).

- Participants who supported the Truss type shared that this option retains Bend's historical character and is more cost-friendly for the project, including ongoing maintenance. Other participants shared that the Truss type would look outdated (reminiscent of a 1930s railroad bridge) and is not unique enough for Bend.
- Participants who supported the Extradosed type shared that this option fits with Bend as a growing, vibrant city. This option was seen as more pleasant to look at.



TWO TOWER CABLE-STAY



SINGLE TOWER CABLE-STAY



EXTRADOSED



STEEL TRUSS

Design elements repeatedly mentioned by participants were lighting, safety and accessibility, and connectivity to the surrounding transportation network.

- **Lighting:** nearly half of the participants care about lighting including safety concerns, maintenance, and wildlife considerations.
- **Safety and accessibility:** participants mentioned clear signage, safe landings, and special attention to making the entrances accessible for all users, including stairs, elevators, and/or ramps.
- **Connectivity:** participants want to ensure the bridge is connected to Bend's key corridors, bike network, and walking trails.

Greater aesthetics, better land-use compatibility, and limited maintenance cost were the most selected priorities in our participants' selection process.

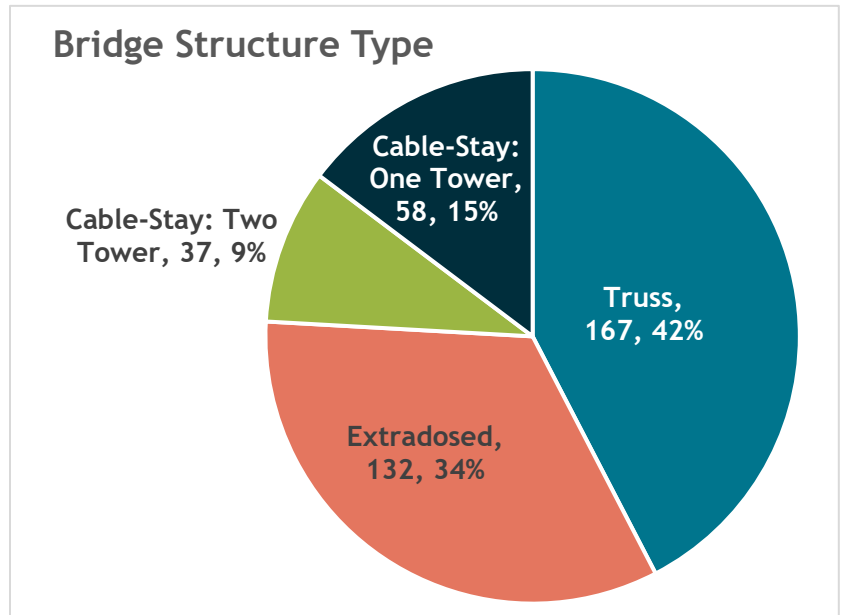
Regarding the **Bend Parkway Plan**, participants showed a majority support, with **67% saying "Yes" and 15% saying "Unsure," citing safety as a key consideration.** From observations, many shared that vehicles and drivers leaving the Parkway are often continuing to travel at near highway speeds. Participants saying "No" (18%) shared reasons including increased traffic at other exits and losing a vital access point to downtown.

FEEDBACK SUMMARY

We received 45 in-person, 351 online, and two (2) email responses. The following feedback themes emerged from the 398 surveys submitted.

1. Which of the four bridge structure types would you like to see advanced into the design phase? (381 responses)

Through this outreach activity, the **Truss bridge type received the most support from the community at 42%**. Support was followed closely by the **Extradosed bridge type at 34%**. The Extradosed type received slightly more support at the in-person open house. In the comments, some participants mentioned that the Truss type feels more rustic or suitable for a “mountain town” with a historical character. Participants shared that the Truss type is functional and streamlined without being too showy. Participants liked that it was less expensive and had lower maintenance costs than the other options. However, some participants shared that the Truss type would quickly feel outdated without some extra effort to make it more modern. Some supporters of the Extradosed type shared that they want a modern bridge that is still attractive and welcoming and retains lower maintenance costs. One participant did not select a type and wrote in “none.”



2. What other design elements (e.g. lighting, wayfinding, connectivity, safety, aesthetics, stairs) would you like to see considered as design proceeds for the bridge overcrossing? (212 responses)

- (97) Nearly half of those who left comments in this section mentioned **lighting** as key to a successful bridge design. A few even brought up the need for lighting under the bridge for safety and activation. Other participants see lighting opportunities for seasonal and holiday events.
 - (13) Some mentioned the need for **dark sky compliance** and limiting environmental impacts at night.
- (50) **Safety and accessibility** were significant considerations for participants. Getting on and off the bridge easily and feeling comfortable doing so is very important.
- (41) The bridge's **connectivity to the surrounding transportation network** is critical to many participants. This includes safety in making connections to nearby locations (bike network, downtown businesses, integration with Drake and Juniper parks and other key routes) without stress.

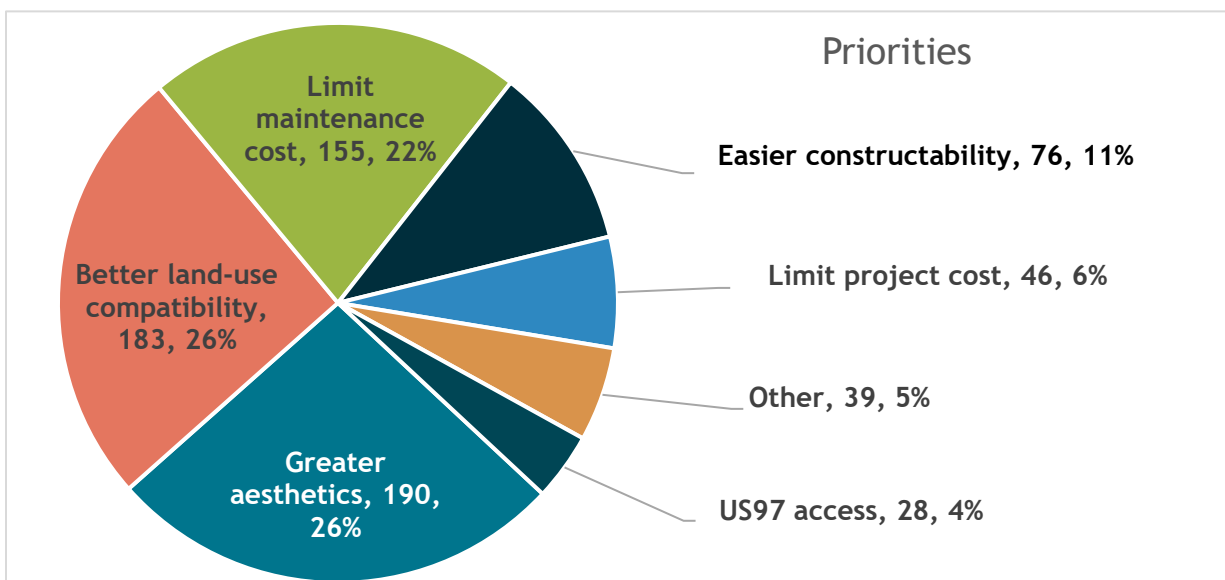


- (35) **Aesthetics** is an overall high priority for those participating. Some participants mentioned “iconic” in their preferred classification. i.e., an iconic part of the skyline or pedestrian landmark for Bend.
- (26) Several participants mentioned **stairs or elevator access** as being important, specifically at the First Street landing. Participants shared that the stairs would allow for a shorter crossing for those not traveling on bikes or stairs with a bike rail so cyclists can access the stairs, too.
- (26) **Wayfinding** was equally as important. Maps or signage to businesses and parks at both landings
- (21) Some participants mentioned the need for **separate and marked lanes** for biking and walking to increase safety and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. They would like lanes that are wide and spacious, so users don’t experience the bridge as a “funnel.”
- (15) Several people suggested convenience measures, such as **noise reduction barriers** to reduce highway noise or **weather protection** (shade, heat strips for de-icing, or anti-slip surfaces).
- (11) Some brought up an interest in activating the **landing areas** at the ends of the bridge or the space under the bridge landings. Ideas include food trucks, parks, tree landscaping, public art, and a plaza space.
- (8) A few people desired a more casual experience on the bridge, somewhere to stop and rest or take in the views of the mountains. (7) Some also mentioned adding landscaping on the bridge itself or on the landings for aesthetic, environmental, and climate resilience reasons.

3. What are your priorities for the selection of the bridge? (688 selections - Participants could select up to two options.)

We asked participants for their top two priorities in deciding which bridge to build. The options were:

- **Better land-use compatibility** – I want the bridge to fit well with the planned surrounding development.
- **Greater aesthetics** – I want a more visually appealing bridge.
- **Limiting maintenance cost** – I want lower annual and long-term costs.
- **Easier constructability** – I want the bridge to be constructed quickly and with less impact on the surroundings.
- **Limiting project cost** – I want the bridge to cost less to design, construct, and purchase the right of way.
- **Maintaining US97 Southbound access at Hawthorne exit** – I don't want the Parkway exit to close or limit vehicle size.
- **Other priority?**



Greater aesthetics and land-use compatibility were the top two choices of participants, with 26% each of the selections. Limiting on-going maintenance was the third most selected option with 22%. 39 people added in an additional priority, with the following themes emerging.

Please provide the other priority not listed above. (39 responses)

- (20) **Ease of use for bikes and pedestrians** emerged as the primary priority in comments. This includes considering the grade of the ramps, separation of uses, and accessibility. These participants expressed concern about ensuring that most users can access the bridge and begin to use it regularly.
- (12) **Safety** emerged as a significant follow-up to accessibility as a priority.
- (7) **Connecting existing and new infrastructure** for bikes to ensure the bridge functions well within the transportation network was listed as key to the future success of the bridge. This includes better intersection treatments and crosswalks. Some mentioned the closure of the Parkway exit would be critical to this end.
- A few items that were mentioned just once or twice include:
 - Weather protection
 - Wildlife or environmental impacts
 - Traffic/noise reduction
 - Protecting views
 - Suicide prevention measures
- Two participants indicated they think the bridge is a waste of money.

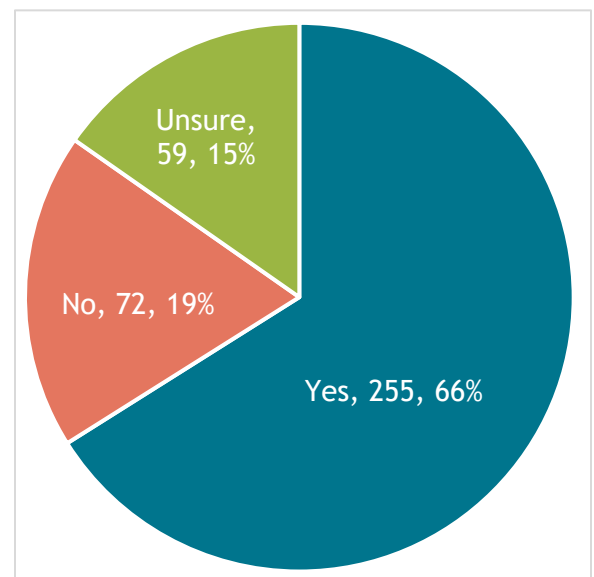


4. The current Bend Parkway Plan includes a closure of the entrance to the Parkway at Hawthorne Avenue and maintains the exit for vehicles to go westbound on Hawthorne. Based on the safety considerations you've seen presented, would you support the team pursuing an amendment to the Parkway Plan to fully close the Hawthorne exit and entrance to the Parkway? (385 responses)

The majority (67%) of participants are in favor of pursuing closure of the Hawthorne exit and entrance for the Parkway.

Additional reasoning? (165 responses)

- (61) The overwhelming reason for supporting the closure was that it feels **unsafe**. Many said the current corridor already feels unsafe without a bridge and bike lane. Participants said it would feel very dangerous when additional travel modes are added at this location. Several participants said they would support the exit closure even if the bridge were not built.
 - (13) Other participants supporting the full closure cite the current **traffic** in this location, with many drivers exceeding the **speed limit**.



- (32) Several mentioned that the new bridge on Hawthorne Avenue is meant to prioritize multi-modal travel, especially for biking and walking. Closure would be needed to achieve this goal.
- (31) Many participants mentioned that this intersection **often impedes traffic on US97**. Since there are no on or off-ramps, it can be difficult to use, and they avoid this exit/entrance whenever they can. (6) Some participants mentioned that if the Parkway exit/entrance is left open, a deceleration/acceleration lane should be added.
- (17) Participants across all responses share concern about how the closure would affect **other intersections and Parkway exits**. A complete traffic analysis and corresponding improvements will be needed to ensure consistent travel times.
- (14) Some suggested just **closing the onramp but keeping the exit** would be a better option.
- (13) Even among participants who do not support the closure, many said the **speeds on the Parkway are too fast** and need better speed control measures.
- (11) The use of Hawthorne for downtown access was mentioned, whether for getting folks out of downtown after an event or helping them find businesses in the area. Some participants also mentioned that the closure could cause more cut-through traffic on the neighborhood streets.

5. Do you have any other comments or questions? Is there anything else you want to share with us?
(95 responses)

- (25) General support for the project
- (14) Support for biking access and multi-modal transportation system
- (14) Requests to consider additional connectivity and traffic issues
- (8) Opposition to the project
- (5) Concerns that project cost is not worth the benefit

Participants shared concern for the environmental impacts and a desire for artwork to be considered as part of the project.

Some see this bridge and other Midtown improvements as increasing vehicle congestion. A participant cites the 2019 City surveys which showed traffic congestion as a high concern for the community.

A few people talked about their appreciation for the Truss bridge type:

“The non-truss designs are too flashy and overreach for Bend. I'd like to see something that doesn't detract from the mountains and that blends into the small-city vibe we still have and preserves local dollars for connectivity.”



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Primary neighborhoods that participants indicated as having an association with:

- Larkspur 20
- Orchard District 20
- River West 14
- Old Farm District 14
- Old Bend 11
- Mountain View 11
- Midtown 10
- Summit West 10
- Southern Crossing 6

Neighborhoods with less than 5 responses were not included in this list.

