



River Crossing Project

Environmental Assessment (NEPA/SEPA) Scoping

Engagement Summary

Background

The River Crossing Project of the Canyon Road Regional Connection is undergoing an environmental review process. This is an essential time to bring the project to the community and generate public input opportunities. The project team will use community feedback to refine the project. Pierce County began the NEPA process with scoping in summer 2020. The team plans to share draft discipline reports in early 2022 and conclude the NEPA Process with a final public hearing in late 2022.

The purpose of the River Crossing Project is to improve regional mobility of goods and people between the Port of Tacoma and Frederickson manufacturing/industrial center. Due to the expected regional growth in the area, the project is needed to provide a reliable freight corridor that is independent of the existing road network. The River Crossing Project includes a new bridge from Canyon Road East across the Puyallup River into Fife. Pierce County will extend Canyon Road East 52nd Street to 70th Avenue East in the City of Fife.

Pierce County's goals for community engagement during the environmental review process are to:

- Formally introduce the environmental assessment process to the public, local agencies, and other key decision-makers.
- Share the project's purpose and need and opportunities for public participation.
- Collect community feedback on the project's benefits and impacts.



By the numbers

Engagement methods	Participants/recipients
Online open house	6,400 unique visits
Virtual town hall	30 attendees
Pamphlet mailer	585 households
Email	173 email listserv recipients
Comment options	Comments
Online open house	55
Email	24
Postal mail	2
Telephone hotline	1
Social media	Clicks
Facebook	5,514 unique clicks
Twitter	49 total clicks
Instagram	89 total clicks

Outreach methods

The scoping comment period was open from Tuesday, July 7 to Friday, August 7. Social distancing requirements during the summer of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic restricted in-person engagement, so the community engagement approach provided alternative methods for equitably informing the community and soliciting comments.

The following approaches were designed to reach as many homes and businesses as possible within one mile of the project area, including options for participation from people who do not have access to high-speed internet and/or have limited proficiency in English language.



Online open house

The online open house was a branded website introducing participants to the project and the agency's interest in public input. It included a project overview and maps, details on how to provide comments, links to project materials and supporting documents, photos and graphics, and a comment form. The comment form asked for contact information and gave participants the option to leave comments on the project.

Site content

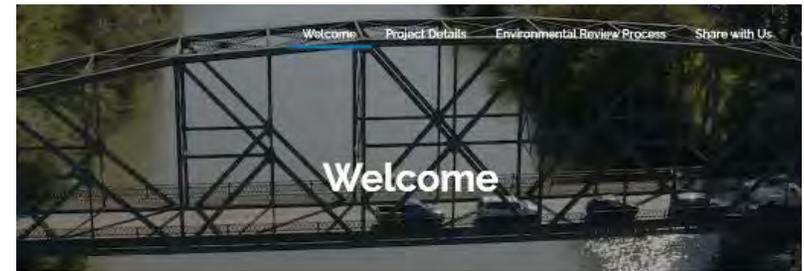
The online open house had four tabs highlighting different subject areas:

- Welcome/home page
- Project details
- Environmental review process
- Share with us

The online open house also linked back to the project website.

Welcome/home

The Home page summarized the River Crossing Project and explained the purpose of the online open house.



Welcome to our online open house.

On this site, you will learn about the **Canyon Road East Northerly Extension Project**, which is undergoing environmental review through the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes. Your input will help us learn what to study as part of our environmental review.

We held a **Virtual Town Hall** on July 23 where participants learned about the River Crossing environmental review process and shared thoughts with the project team. If you missed the event, you can watch a recording [here](#).

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and Pierce County Planning & Public Works (Pierce County) are initiating an Environmental Review for the Canyon Road East Northerly Extension Project from 52nd Street East to 70th Avenue East in Pierce County, Washington (often referred to as the River Crossing Project). The FHWA is the Federal lead agency for NEPA, and Pierce County is the lead agency for SEPA.

Welcome/Home page of the online open house.



Project details

The Project Details page showed the project’s planned improvements and oriented viewers to the project location. The page highlighted the current Milroy Bridge and a rendering of the future bridge. It also displayed a timeline for right of way acquisition, design, and construction.

Completing an important connection between Frederickson and the Port of Tacoma

Pierce County will extend Canyon Road East from 52nd Street East to 70th Avenue East in Fife. The project improvements will support the local economy, provide a new route and reduce travel time. This project includes the following planned improvements:

- Constructing a new bridge over the Puyallup River and removing the existing Milroy Bridge.
- Constructing a new bridge over Clark Creek.
- Expanding and extending Canyon Road East to two lanes in each direction with turn lanes at intersections.
- Building concrete curb, gutter and sidewalk.
- Constructing an enclosed storm drain system as well as stormwater treatment and storage facilities.
- Replacing traffic signal at Canyon Road East & 96th Avenue East.



Existing Milroy Bridge to be removed



Map of Pierce County's River Crossing project, which extends Canyon Road East from 52nd Street East to 70th Avenue East in Fife. Blue lines represent future corridor improvements. Click the map to enlarge.



Visualization of the future bridge over the Puyallup River. View is looking northwest, with City of Fife on the right

Environmental review process

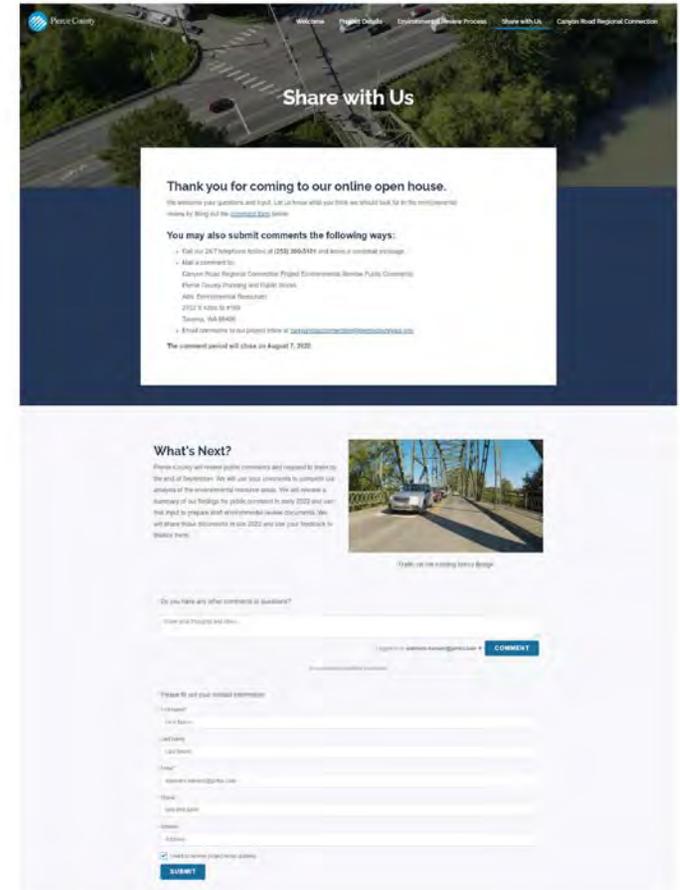
The Environmental Review Process page explained what an environmental review is and described the environmental resource areas the project team is analyzing as part of the review. The page invited visitors to type their comments at the bottom of the page in the comment form after they read through the information presented. The page encouraged visitors to comment on any other environmental resource areas the project team should evaluate and any possible impacts they should look at.





Share with us

The Share with Us page invited users to submit additional comments about the project or environmental review. It also listed other comment opportunities and the project email address for users to send additional questions about the project once the online open house closed. This page also went over next steps, including when to expect a summary of findings from the environmental review.



Share with Us page of the online open house.



- Do you have any other comments or questions?

Telephone hotline

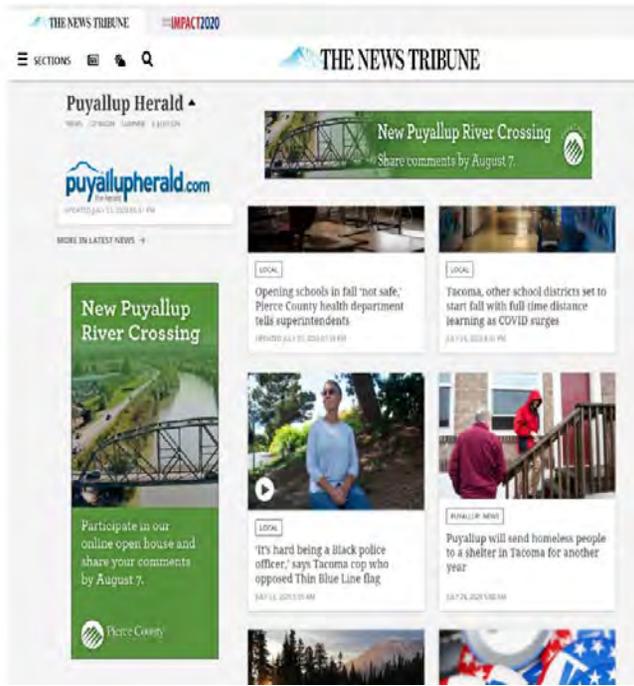
A 24-hour telephone hotline accepted voice message comments during the 30-day comment period. A phone tree included greetings in English and Spanish. The hotline was an opportunity for people who have limited internet access or connectivity issues to submit project comments.

Project email

The project inbox accepted emailed comments and attachments throughout the 30-day comment period. The project team listed the email address on all project materials, including the project website, online open house, and mailer.

Postal mail

Residents and businesses within one mile of the project area had the option to mail in their comments during the 30-day comment period using the comment form included with the project pamphlet mailer. The project team posted the mailing address on the project website, online open house, and published it in the project mailer. The postal mail comment option was another opportunity for people who have limited internet access or connectivity issues to submit comments.



Banner ads on the Puyallup Herald website.

Notification

Pierce County notified the public about the online open house and alternative engagement opportunities through the following activities:

- Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register and the Determination of Significance in the SEPA Register.
- Legal notices published in Tacoma News Tribune/The News Tribune and Puyallup Herald.
- Online display ads and social media posts (as described in the section below).
- Direct mail pamphlet and survey sent to all the addresses within a one-mile radius of the corridor.
- Email notice and reminder sent to the project listserv and other contacts.
- Announcement posted on Pierce County's project website.
- News release sent to statewide media announcing the scoping engagement opportunities.

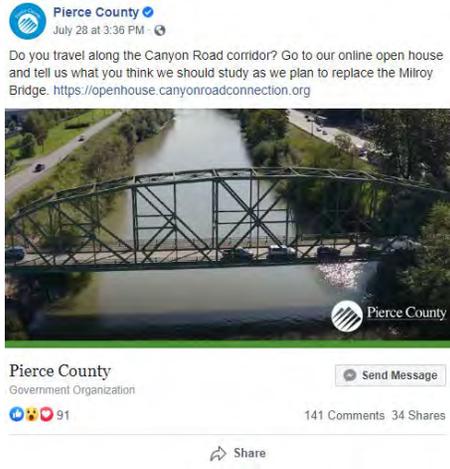


Notification by the numbers:

- Pamphlets with tear-off comment cards sent to 585 residents and businesses.
- 173 individuals received an email notice on July 7 and 189 individuals (including new subscribers) received an email reminder on July 21 via the Canyon Road Regional Connection Project listserv.
- Geotargeted Google ads received 266,959 impressions and 1,420 clicks with a click through rate of .53%. The click through rate was on par with the overall industry benchmark.
- Google ads targeting Spanish speakers received 105,205 impressions and 437 clicks with a click through rate of .42%.
- Banner ads on TheNewsTribune.com received 141,284 impressions and 86 clicks with a click through rate of .06%.
- Banner ads on PuyallupHerald.com received 29,121 impressions and 33 clicks with a click through rate of .11%. PuyallupHerald.com lives on TheNewsTribune.com website and received better engagement than TheNewsTribune.com pages. However, the ad on PuyallupHerald.com reached the maximum number of impressions served, which limited its performance.
- Two Facebook posts from the Pierce County account with 13,724 followers.
- One Facebook post from the Pierce County Planning and Public Works page with 4,228 followers.
- Two Twitter posts from the Pierce County account with 44,203 followers.
- One Instagram post from the Pierce County account with 2,813 followers.

Key advertising metrics

- Clicks: Number of people who clicked the ad and clicked through to the online open house
- Impressions: Number of people who saw the ad
- Click through rate (CTR): Number of impressions divided by clicks



Pierce County Facebook post from July 28.

Website traffic and social interaction

The online open house received 6,400 unique visits during the 30-day comment period. A visit is when at least one page loads for a user. “Unique” visits count a user who visits the site multiple times only once.

Pierce County posted a link to the online open house three times on Facebook, including one post by the Pierce County Planning and Public Works page, twice on Twitter, and once on Instagram. Users shared the Facebook posts a total of 323 times and received a total of 584 reactions and 466 comments. The Twitter posts received nine likes, five comments, 4,829 impressions, and 49 clicks. The Instagram post received seven likes, 436 impressions, and four clicks.

Pierce County boosted one Facebook post. The ad received 5,514 unique clicks. Due to limited analytics, the bounce rate cannot be calculated. However, because the number of clicks is close to the number of unique visits (6,400), we know a large amount of traffic came from the Facebook ad to the online open house.

Comment summary

Community members submitted a total of 82 comments: 24 via email, 55 through the online open house, one through the project telephone hotline, and two through postal mail.

The comments focused on various aspects of the project, including:

- Preserving and/or moving the Milroy Bridge
 - Many participants urged the project team to leave the existing Milroy Bridge in place, in addition to building the new bridge, to serve as an alternate route for bicyclists/pedestrians and to accommodate local traffic during peak times.
- Local congestion and problem areas



- Many people expressed concern that the new infrastructure will cause more congestion and not effectively decrease the time it takes to cross the river.
- Project design
 - Many participants submitted project design ideas. Several participants would like to see a wider bridge and car lanes that are wide enough to handle large trucks and trailers. Many commenters also proposed having two bridges instead of one. They would like to see a safer bridge with a better traffic signal system.
- Project timeline
 - Several commenters expressed excitement about the bridge replacement project, said it was long overdue, and hoped it could happen sooner than currently planned.
- Right-of-way impacts, including several about the Radiance housing development and the Ardena Gale mobile home park
 - Several participants owning property or living near the project area expressed concerns about right-of-way impacts and the property acquisition timeline.
- Agricultural community
 - Several participants had questions about the project's effects on farms in the area and encouraged the project team to investigate other options that do not affect local farms.
- Bicycle/pedestrian improvements and safety
 - Several participants urged the project team to add bike lanes and sidewalks and consider leaving Milroy Bridge to use as a pedestrian and non-motorized bridge. Several residents said the area by the river needs more walkways and there is currently no safe bike route between Puyallup and Fife.
- Environmental
 - A few participants expressed concern for the wildlife and streams in the area as well as how the potential increase in traffic will impact agricultural crops grown in the project area.