



# SR 500 42nd Ave to 54th Ave Safety Improvements Study concepts public input report, May 3-25, 2018

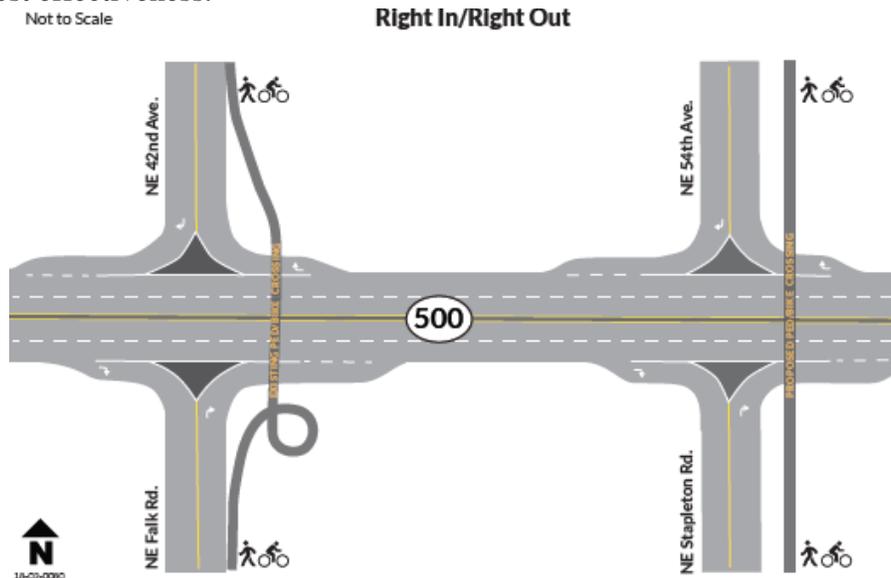
## Survey Analysis: Overall Feedback

Collectively, the seven open-ended questions on the survey received 1,307 responses. Responses to the three concepts studied were mixed. About half the responses to the No Access concept were positive. Responses to the Right-In, Right-Out concept were mostly positive, and responses to the R-CUT concept were overwhelming negative. Participants provided more feedback about why they disliked any given concept than about why they liked a concept. Those who liked a concept responded by and large with a brief affirmative statement, whereas those who disliked a concept, or had concerns, provided much more detailed feedback. Overall themes captured across all three concepts' responses are discussed below.

## Survey Analysis: Concept Feedback

### Right In, Right Out, 390 response

The Right-In, Right-Out concept received the most positive feedback of the three, with about two-thirds of participants responding with favorable comments that noted a straightforward street design and cost effectiveness.



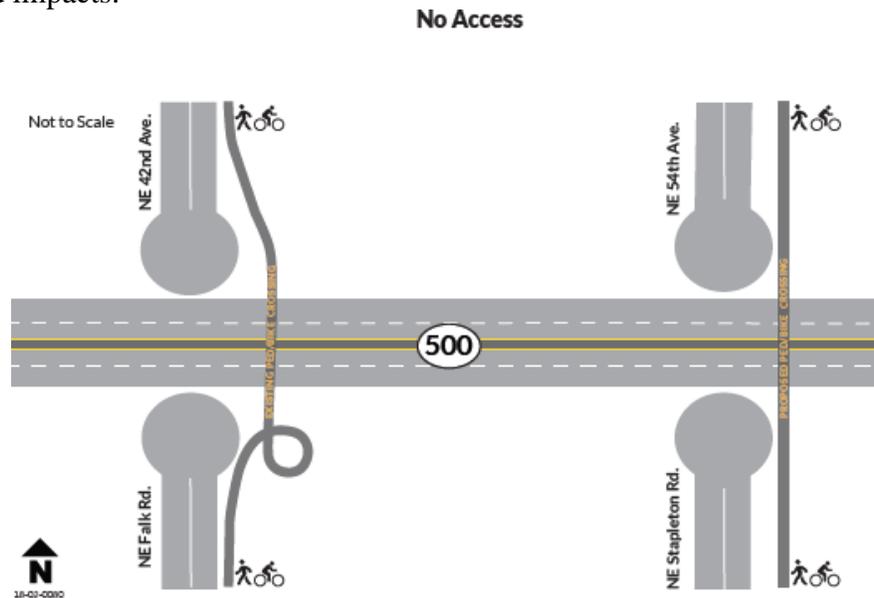
### Key Themes:

- **Equitable Access to SR 500:** Many participants commented that the Right-In, Right-Out concept provided more appropriate access to SR 500 than the No Access. Some even noted that while the Right-In, Right-Out concept would inconvenience them personally, it would best serve the greatest number of people. Other respondents still articulated concern about limited access from surrounding streets.
- **Merging onto SR 500:** Many participants commented that the acceleration and deceleration lanes entering and exiting SR 500 would need to be longer to avoid rear-end collisions and backup traffic.
- **Add Continuous Lane:** Some participants suggested that a continuous lane for direct travel between St. Johns Boulevard and NE Andresen Road be added to the Right-In, Right-Out design.
- **Frequency of Left Turns:** Some respondents expressed a preference for reducing the number of left turns available from the four connecting roads rather than eliminating all left turns as outlined in the concept.
- **Distance Between Exits:** Many participants noted that they knew the illustration was not to scale, but that they still perceived the distance between exits, such as NE 42nd Avenue to NE 54th Avenue, to be too short, which could cause backups and rear-end collisions.
- **Add U-Turn at St. Johns:** Some respondents suggested that a U-turn, or some other turning mechanism, be implemented at St. Johns Boulevard to allow drivers to quickly redirect their travel.
- **Travel Delays for Emergency Services:** While fewer participants expressed concern about emergency services in relation to the Right-In, Right-Out concept than to the No Access concept, some did comment that this concept would delay emergency response times. They suggested making turning or U-turn accommodations for emergency response vehicles that would allow those vehicles to move across SR 500 and access connecting streets and neighborhoods.
- **Increased Side Street and Neighborhood Congestion:** Though the Right-In, Right-Out concept was favorably received overall, participants expressed concern that it would have adverse impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and increase traffic on streets leading into or through those neighborhoods. Several respondents mentioned NE 40th Avenue and NE 42nd Avenue as streets that drivers would likely use as cut-throughs to other destinations.

### No Access, 367 responses

Feedback on the No Access concept was mixed, with roughly half of participants responding positively to the concept overall. Those respondents liked the direct routing and elimination of traffic lights and the prospect of its functioning more like a typical highway or freeway system.

Others disliked this concept for its lack of access to SR 500, its rerouting of their commutes, and neighborhood impacts.



#### Key Themes:

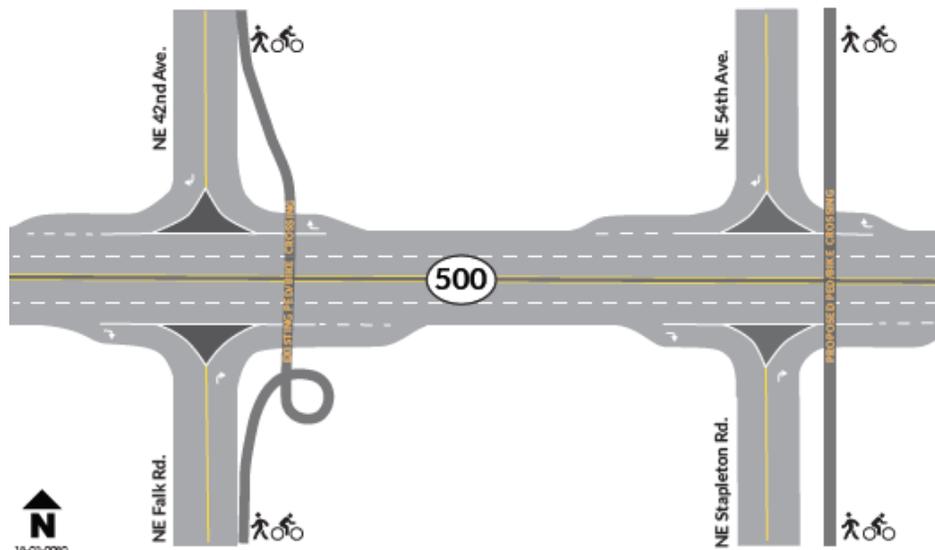
- **Improved Safety and Travel Times on SR 500:** Many participants agreed that the No Access concept would improve safety and travel times on SR 500 by eliminating traffic lights and turns to other streets.
- **Travel Delays and Reduced Access for Emergency Services:** Many participants expressed concern that the No Access concept would cause delayed response times for emergency services. Participants said responders located within the project area would be delayed in leaving for an emergency, and those neighborhoods with limited access to SR 500 would have to wait longer for emergency responses. Some participants also expressed concern that the isolated areas around the cul-de-sacs might attract illegal activity.
- **Increased Side Street and Neighborhood Congestion:** While many participants noted that travel times could improve on SR 500, at least a third expressed concern that this concept would create safety and congestion issues on side streets and in surrounding neighborhoods. Several respondents expressed concern about adverse impacts on area schools, including longer travel times and delayed emergency responses.
- **Pedestrian Safety:** In conjunction with the issue of neighborhood congestion, participants expressed concern that side streets lacked decent sidewalks or proper pedestrian accommodations to deal with increased vehicular traffic. Many respondents noted Fourth Plain as a street with higher pedestrian activity and suggested the No Access concept would push traffic into this area.

- **Costs for Side Streets:** Participants said improvements would need to be made to side street sidewalks, lane widths and signage and that those costs needed to be factored into the total cost of the project.
- **Need for Aesthetic Maintenance:** Some participants had concerns that the cul-de-sacs created in this concept would become forgotten public spaces and easy targets for illegal activity or encampments. Respondents suggested WSDOT develop a design and maintenance plan for the cul-de-sacs so that these areas have strong aesthetic appeal and do not create a sense of isolation for those living nearby.
- **Add Frontage Road:** Some participants suggested a lower speed frontage road between St. Johns Boulevard and NE Andresen Road to maintain local access while discouraging high speed drivers who would be better served by SR 500.
- **Implement Alternative Traffic Flow Tools:** Several respondents suggested that roundabouts or diverging diamond interchanges be considered as ways to improve traffic flow without limiting access to surrounding neighborhoods or creating longer east-west travel times.

## R-CUT, 328 response

Not to Scale

### Right In/Right Out



Participant response to the R-CUT concept was overwhelmingly negative due to the perceived complexity of the design and higher cost of the project.

### Public Input Key Themes:

- **Complexity of Design:** Participants consistently described the R-CUT concept as confusing or too complex. Even those who said they understood the concept expressed doubt that the average driver (particularly any who are not local) would understand how to navigate the roadways and traffic lights.

- **High Cost:** Respondents mentioned the cost of this concept more frequently than that of any of the other concepts. They consistently noted it was the most expensive of the three and the worst option when looking at cost-benefit analysis.
- **Excess Traffic Lights:** Across the responses to all three concepts, there was a consensus that current traffic lights on SR 500 are key contributors to congestion, rear-end collisions, and other accidents. Participants who responded to the R-CUT concept consistently expressed concern that the traffic lights would not improve congestion and instead would worsen safety and travel times.
- **Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety:** Several respondents wrote that the R-CUT concept lacks appropriate accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists at NE Stapleton Road and NE 54th Avenue. They suggested that an overpass (similar to the one in the No Access concept) would be a better option than the proposed crosswalk.
- **Turning Safety:** Participants shared concerns that the R-CUT concept would increase the likelihood of dangerous accidents near the U-turns, as well as illegal use of the turns by confused or impatient drivers.

### Overall Key Themes:

- **Better Traffic Signal Timing and Signage:** In conjunction with recommendations for improved safety enforcement, many participants suggested that better timed traffic signals and signage could improve safety and decrease rear-end collisions during peak travel times.
- **Need for Improved Safety Enforcement:** In the feedback to both the individual concepts and the “what else” question, many participants suggested that better enforcement of speed limits and penalties for dangerous driving behaviors could help reduce the number of accidents on SR 500. Enforcement could include greater patrol presence and more frequent ticketing, as well as camera monitoring. Some participants suggested that revenue from ticketing could go toward funding for a future overpass.
- **Need for Overpass:** While the online open house made clear that the survey was not related to an overpass and that there is no state funding dedicated to an overpass, the issue of the overpass came up frequently throughout the concept feedback and responses to the “what else” question. About 20 percent of responses to the “what else” question mentioned the need for the overpass. Many respondents suggested that the community would be better off in the long term if the immediate focus were on safety enforcement along SR 500 and if funding for the concepts currently under consideration were reallocated to the construction of an overpass.
- **Lower Speed Limits:** Many participants suggested that lower speed limits could help reduce accidents and would be a low-cost solution for the near future until an overpass is built.