

**Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project
Citizen's Advisory Committee
Thursday, April 16, 2009
Holgate Plaza, 1625 SE Holgate Blvd**

Meeting Notes

PMLR CAC Members Present:

Rick Williams – CHAIR, Lloyd District Transportation Management Association
Heather Andrews, Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA)
David Aschenbrenner, Hector Campbell Neighborhood
Lina Bensel, TriMet Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT)
Ray Bryan, Historic Milwaukie Neighborhood
Valerie Chapman, Oak Grove
Debbie Cronk, South Waterfront Neighborhood
Frank Dufay, Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood (HAND) (for Sue Pearce)
David Edwards, Oak Grove
Jim Fullan, Portland Opera (for Valeria Ramirez)
Neil Hankerson, Dark Horse Comics
Greg Hemer, Milwaukie Lumber
Michole Jensen, Ardenwald-Johnson Creek Neighborhood
Reid Kells, Sellwood-Moreland Neighborhood (SMILE)
Lance Lindahl, Brooklyn Neighborhood (BAC)
Rod McDowell, Oregon Museum of Science & Industry (OMSI)
Dan Packard, Eastmoreland Neighborhood
Henry Schmidt, Oak Lodge Community Council
Dee Walsh, Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC)
Lynn Welsh, Milwaukie - Island Station Neighborhood
Dan Zalkow, Portland - Portland State University (PSU)

PMLR CAC Members Absent:

Barbara Dimick, Oak Grove
Ken Love, South Portland Neighborhood
Susan Pearce, Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood (HAND)
Valeria Ramirez, Portland Opera
Joe Traverso, WW Metal Fab

Rick Williams (CAC Chair) welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

Dave Unsworth (TriMet Deputy Project Director) presented the Preliminary Engineering update.

The project was approved by the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) for Preliminary Engineering (PE) on March 30, 2009. The project received a “medium-high” rating, which is above average, and a higher rating than has been issued on other TriMet

projects. Dave thanked everyone who has worked on the project for the team effort in getting to this milestone.

Our next effort is to reach 30% engineering by March 2010. Final design approval should come in October 2010. In PE we will continue working on all the issues that were brought to you in previous meetings.

We have now issued notice to proceed to our consultant teams for the east and west segments. Land surveying is underway on McLoughlin Boulevard and other locations. The streets have been marked for an aerial survey of the alignment. Metro will be working on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) with their consultant Parametrix. FTA's project management oversight consultant (PMOC) will be meeting with us on a monthly basis. Staff is very engaged with jurisdictional staff and many public meetings have already happened and will continue to be scheduled.

Dave Unsworth (TriMet Deputy Project Director) presented information, via a PowerPoint presentation, the project team has been gathering about options for minimizing train horn noise.

The project team invited a consultant, Railroad Controls Limited (RCL), to bring us up-to-date on train horn noise. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) requires horns to be sounded to warn motorists at public crossings, but provides exceptions where risk is minimized. FRA rules do not apply to rapid transit (including light rail) unless they share a crossing with heavy rail. FRA requires freight trains to sound horns at a volume of 96-110 decibels, in order to warn motorists. The Oregon Department of Transportation Rail Division (ODOT Rail) makes the rules regarding train horns for rapid transit in Oregon.

TriMet currently uses three kinds of horns to warn motorists and citizens. One horn (bell) is used at the train stop to let people know the train is about to move. A horn will also be sounded if someone is crossing the tracks at an unsafe distance from the train. Finally, a loud horn is used if the train operator sees someone engaged in unsafe behavior near the train.

At two groups of intersections in Southeast Portland and Milwaukie, light rail trains would share crossings with freight trains, thus subjecting light rail trains to the FRA rules. The increase in the number of horns blown a day would increase from 16 to at least 150 in Portland and 10 to at least 150 in Milwaukie. Potential solutions for this problem include a train horn waiver, a quiet zone and using wayside horns.

To learn more about these options, the project team invited RCL to come and speak to the community about train noise, we held a wayside horn demonstration in Tualatin, we hired an attorney specializing in train horn waivers and we continue to meet with Union Pacific Railroad, ODOT, and local jurisdictions.

Dave then explained each of the options.

A train horn waiver allows lower sound levels for light rail trains. TriMet scheduled a briefing on train horn waivers for April 17th with an attorney who has successfully secured train horn waivers from the FRA.

A Quiet Zone is a section of rail line, at least one-half mile long, at which all train horns are not routinely sounded. Public authorities (i.e., local governments) can establish a Quiet Zone by proving that the lack of horns does not pose a significant safety risk, if there are FRA-defined supplemental safety measures (SSMs). SSMs include street closures and various types of gates such as four-quadrant gates with vehicle detection systems. With appropriate SSMs, the public authority confirms that the risk without horns (Quiet Zone Risk Index) is equal to or less than the National Average Risk Index, and then designates the area as a Quiet Zone. If SSMs are not feasible, the public authority must develop Alternative Safety Measures (ASMs) and apply to FRA for Quiet Zone approval.

Quiet Zone procedures include providing a 60-day comment period for all railroads and state regulatory agencies, convening a diagnostic team (including the railroads, local jurisdictions and FRA) to review all crossings and agree on treatments, installing appropriate safety measures and warning signs, updating the National Grade Crossing Inventory, and submitting periodic updates to the FRA every few years.

The wayside horn option also allows all trains to not routinely blow their horns. A wayside horn is a stationary horn system located at a crossing that sounds like a locomotive horn, but has a much smaller “sound footprint” than horns installed on trains. Wayside horns reduce noise pollution and improve safety for motorists and pedestrians.

The project budget has assumed costs of four-quadrant gates in Milwaukie and has assumed some supplemental safety measures in SE Portland. We will continue to keep the community updated on the train noise issue.

Dee Walsh (CAC member) asked if the horns blow the whole time the train is going through the intersection?

Dave replied that the horn stops when the train enters the intersection.

Dan Packard (CAC member) asked if freight trains also observe the Quiet Zone?

Dave confirmed that a Quiet Zone would apply to freight trains as well as light rail trains. However, if train engineer feels there is unsafe behavior the trains will blow horn. Safety is always the most important objective.

Leah Robbins (TriMet East Segment Director) presented an update on 17th Avenue station locations.

We held a stakeholder meeting on March 11 and heard strong feedback that the neighborhood wants to see two stations, like shown in the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Since then, staff have been working to find other ways to address some of the concerns raised in the City of Portland's Exhibit C. The two main issues are optimizing the stations in SE Portland and making 17th Avenue work for trucks, especially at Holgate.

The main issue for the community is how we can we make a Holgate station work while keeping 17th Avenue working for truck traffic. We will be meeting with the community next Wednesday about this issue at Winterhaven School. We are really excited to show everyone how we have responded to the community's feedback.

Lance Lindhal (CAC member) noted that at the March 11 meeting on this topic, about 125 residents attended -- the biggest group of people attending a neighborhood meeting in years.

Sean Batty (TriMet West Segment Design Manager) provided an update on the Lincoln Street station location, referencing a handout. The project team did technical work with City bureaus and TriMet and confirmed that the station location noted in the LPA on Lincoln between 1st Avenue and 4th Avenue was technically the best place for the station to be. We then held a stakeholder workshop/open house on April 7. Based on the technical work and the feedback we got at the open house we confirmed that this was the best place for the station. This closes the policy issue and allows us to start the PE process.

Valerie Chapman (CAC member): Was the decision to have one station instead of two?

Sean Batty: Yes, the LPA, technical research, and stakeholders affirmed that one station on Lincoln between 1st and 4th avenues was the best location.

Robert Barnard (TriMet West Segment Director) presented a Willamette River Bridge update. The Willamette River Bridge Advisory Committee (WRBAC) agreed with the CAC that the Wave Frame bridge type should be removed from further consideration, and the cable-stayed bridge type should be advanced into PE. Also, we were tasked with exploring the viability of the cable-stayed self-anchored suspension (CS-SAS, or "hybrid") bridge.

Rob acknowledged that some recent newspaper articles about a model of a hybrid bridge on display at Portland City Hall might have been confusing. The model and event were done by a private consultant, and were not TriMet sponsored. No decision about which variety of the cable stayed types has been made.

TriMet hired HNTB (engineering firm) to advance the design of the hybrid bridge and verify its feasibility, so it can be compared with other types. There are a number of structural refinements that need to be resolved so that we can have an accurate analysis. This includes looking at options for minimizing the cost of the hybrid, optimizing the span width and anchoring the piers and abutments.

HNTB and their consultant, the National Constructors Group, did the cost analysis on all the other bridges, so when they complete the analysis we will have an “apples to apples” comparison.

Rob reiterated that the decision has not been made yet about the final bridge. We still are still doing technical analysis and exploring cost.

Valerie Chapman (CAC member) asked if we are trying to make hybrid cost effective.

Rob confirmed that the team is committed to studying the hybrid option in detail so all options can be weighed equally.

Dan Zalkow (CAC member) asked if the bicycle path width will be resolved in the next step.

Rob confirmed that we want to have bike path width, bridge height and type resolved by June for the PMLR Steering Committee meeting.

Rob went on to explain that there are only two examples of hybrid bridges in the U.S.; the Brooklyn Bridge and North Avenue in Chicago. (HTNB was the engineer on record for the Chicago bridge so we’ve got a firm with recent experience on this bridge type.)

Henry Schmidt (CAC Member) asked about costs shown in the presentation.

Rob confirmed that \$134 million is the current budget number, but the estimated cost is still being refined.

Henry expressed relief that the information in the newspaper was inaccurate in indicating that a \$154 million bridge had been selected.

Rick Williams (CAC Chair) confirmed that the project team has cost estimates for the wave frame and cable-stayed types, and will get an equally accurate estimate for the hybrid type to compare against the budget. The CAC and WRBAC will have an opportunity to comment before the Steering Committee makes a decision.

Dave Unsworth (TriMet Deputy Project Director) presented update on stimulus projects, confirming that the federal stimulus package that was passed by Congress gave TriMet about \$53 million to spend. Fred Hansen, TriMet General Manager, has been very involved in the details of the stimulus package and is working hard to create

jobs on Oregon. TriMet has identified almost 30 projects for stimulus funding. Regulations require that 50% of funds we have to be obligated by September 2009. One 100 percent of the funds have to be ready to go by next year. Each of these projects has to be “shovel-ready” so that the environmental process, which is time consuming, is already done. Two of the projects being managed by TriMet are Milwaukie (Southgate) Park & Ride and the Transit Police South Precinct facility at the Clackamas Town Center light rail parking structure.

The stimulus package funds will not apply to the Portland-Milwaukie project because it is not “shovel ready.”

Henry Schmidt (CAC member) remarked that there has been talk in Washington about having more money available for transportation projects. How will this affect future light rail projects in our area?

Dave affirmed that the future does look good for more federal funding for transit.

Claudia Steinberg (TriMet Community Affairs Manager) presented a Public Involvement Update, referring to the Public Meeting Log handout.

Three open houses and numerous stakeholder meetings took place in February and March, all of which were well attended. We rely on the CAC to help us get more people involved. We want as many people as possible in the community to be involved in our stakeholder meetings. Milwaukie will be having monthly light rail meetings. The first couple of these meetings will impart general information about the project with subsequent meetings getting into more detail. City of Milwaukie will send out invitations for these meetings.

CAC Member Roundtable

Rick Williams (CAC Chair) asked the CAC members to tell us what concerns they are hearing in their communities.

Reid Kells (CAC member) suggested that the Oak Grove folks should get together and invite the WRBAC to visit the Oak Grove Station location, in its context as a “gateway” to the entire TriMet system as a design challenge. We want to ask them what they are going to do with this limited space. Secondly, folks from the Woodstock, Reed, Eastmoreland and Brooklyn neighborhoods need to talk about bicycle/pedestrian crossing plan for the Harold Street station.

Michole Jensen (CAC member) noted that Tacoma Street safety and security issues are important to the Ardenwald/Johnson Creek neighborhood. The alignment is elevated along the Tillamook branch line and the height of that elevation is a concern.

There was one photo taken in the SDEIS from Roswell and you can see the light rail line. The neighborhood thinks track is too high in the air.

Debbie Cronk (CAC member) explained that she is from the South Waterfront area, and that most neighbors are so excited about bridge that they don't care where the line is going. Nobody talks about Lincoln Station. Debbie went to the Historic Milwaukie meeting and everyone there says they are afraid the project is not going to go to make it to Park Avenue. They are concerned that too much money will be spent on the bridge and we'll be stuck with traffic at Lake.

Henry Schmidt (CAC member) remarked that Oak Grove is concerned about what the Park Avenue station will look like. Our concern is that money will run out and short cuts will be taken. Henry also commented that the Rose Villa presentation was very well done. Finally, there are a number of concerns about the Park Avenue station that will come up later as the project progresses. For example, we don't want law enforcement issues, we don't want traffic to bottleneck, including on secondary streets like River and Oldfield roads. We are hoping that all these issues get addressed as we move forward.

Ray Bryan (CAC member) explained that the subject of safety and security in Milwaukie comes up at every meeting we have. Another concern is how long gates at crossings stop traffic and what the crossings will do to traffic circulation in general.

Dave Aschenbrenner (CAC member) commented that the bridge over Kellogg Lake is important, and would like to see a pedestrian element. The elevated structure visible from Ardenwald is also a concern.

Reid Kells (CAC member) concurred about security issues. The number one comment that comes from my community is that TriMet needs to verify and validate fares to maintain security at stations. I hear that people without fares cause trouble and this action would resolve security issues.

Valerie Chapman (CAC member) remarked that the sense is that the Milwaukie community doesn't want the line to end at Lake because they perceive that it would create problems, so they want the line pushed to Park Avenue. This is the basic tension that we are hearing right now. A lot of people are afraid for their security on transit. This is an issue with the elderly. I suggest doing some public relations around busses and light rail perhaps giving the elderly a free day on light rail and busses.

Debbie Cronk (CAC member) noted that the Milwaukie Police Chief came to Historic Milwaukie neighborhood meeting and he talked about the importance of verifying fares. When the system was set up it was seen as an honor system and this needs to change to a must-pay system.

Lina Bensel (CAC member) added that some people do not ride transit because they are afraid. There is a program, Ride Wise, which gives instruction on how to ride public transit.

Lynn Welsh (CAC member) noted that the Island Station neighborhood's concerns are access in and out of the station, track elevation and noise.

Heather Andrews (CAC member) explained that BTA has concerns about inner SE Portland, including 17th Avenue as a bikeway and suggestions to make a bike boulevard on 16th Avenue.

Jim Fullan (CAC alternate member) commented that in the Portland Opera area, we are focused on the bridge, especially its height.

Frank Dufay (CAC member) cited concerns about noise, traffic and re-zoning. Frank also wondered about cutbacks in bus service when we are putting money into light rail.

Dee Walsh (CAC member) explained that bridge height and freight access are the issues of concern. Regarding redevelopment opportunities on light rail lines, I can give anyone information on the Patton Park mixed-use transit-oriented development: reachcdc.org.

Rod McDowell (CAC member) noted that there is a lot of action around OMSI, including the bridge and streetcar and buses, lots to coordinate. Security is also a concern.

Dan Zalkow (CAC member) commented on the importance of bicycle connections with the bridge and with development nodes all along the alignment. Dan also praised the outreach process for the Lincoln Street station.

Neil Hankerson (CAC member) remarked that the number one topic is extending the alignment to Park Avenue.

Public Comment

Ed Zumwalt (Citizen) noted concerns about crime and security. Ed also asked how the trestle would affect Kronberg Park.

Dave Unsworth (TriMet Deputy Project Director) noted that there may be temporary construction impacts during construction of the bridge over Kellogg Creek, and the design will be sensitive to that. Also, the City of Milwaukie is applying for stimulus funds to remove the Kellogg Lake Dam, which is a barrier to fish passage. We should know by June if that application is successful and the creek restoration could begin soon.

Susan Stone (City of Milwaukie Councilor) responded to the comment about the terminus in Oak Grove instead of Milwaukie. It's not about dumping the station in Oak Grove, but more about how fitting it in would be to have so much transit running through

our small downtown in Milwaukie. We don't want the whole south end of the downtown to become a massive transit station.

Susan added that there has been a lot of focus on the bridge, and wondered why the bridge couldn't accommodate automobiles. Additionally, Susan noted aesthetic concerns, particularly the elevated section near Ardenwald.

Rick Williams (CAC Chair) closed the meeting.