

**Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project
Citizens Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 19, 2009, 6 – 7:30 p.m.
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, Milwaukie - 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
Barbara Dimick, Oak Grove
David Edwards, Oak Grove
Neil Hankerson, Dark Horse Comics
Frank 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)
Eric Miller, Island Station Neighborhood
Susan Pearce, Hosford-Abernethy Neighborhood (HAND)
Ken Love, South Portland Neighborhood
Valeria Ramirez, Portland Opera
Henry Schmidt, Oak Lodge Community Council
Joe Traverso, WW Metal Fab
Dee Walsh, Central Eastside Industrial Council (CEIC)

PMLR CAC Members Absent:

Lynn Welsh, Milwaukie - Island Station Neighborhood
Dan Zalkow, Portland - Portland State University (PSU)

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

Rick asked which members are interested in serving as Vice Chair. David Edwards expressed interest, so Rick asked him to say a few words.

David Edwards (CAC Member) explained that he's been excited about the project since first hearing of it. He lives a quarter mile from the proposed terminus at Park Avenue, and supports the CAC's charge to get the alignment all the way to Park Avenue. He confirmed he has the time, energy and focus to devote to the project.

Rick asked for a vote of CAC members; the committee unanimously voted in favor of David's election to Vice Chair.

Claudia Steinberg (TriMet Community Affairs Manager) explained that she and her staff have been looking for a better location to hold the CAC meetings. St. Philip Neri Church is a possibility.

Dave Unsworth (TriMet Deputy Project Director) discussed TriMet's budget, potential service cuts and changes to Fareless Square.

Due to current economic conditions, TriMet has been forced to cut its budget by \$13.5 million – a 5% across-the-board-cut. This is on top of nearly \$4 million cuts already made, along with the hiring freeze.

Service cuts are proposed for September, which include eliminating 12 bus lines and reducing frequency of service of bus lines that have limited ridership or that are near other bus lines that can provide service to the same area. In some instances time span of daily service will be reduced.

Four options are being considered for the future of Fareless Square. They are: no change, limit to rail only, adjust Lloyd District Boundaries and/or institute a \$1 fare.

There is a three-month public process to hear the communities concerns about the effects of service cuts: four open houses, three hearings, email on website, and 238-RIDE for comments.

Dave went on to discuss key issues on the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Project that need either policy and/or public involvement input for decisions in order to keep the project on schedule and within budget. If we take a long time to make these decisions it will delay the schedule and increase the cost of the project. During the adoption of the locally preferred alternative (LPA), a number of policy and design issues were indentified by local jurisdictions. In addition to these key issues, there will be hundreds of other issues to resolve during Preliminary Engineering and Final Design.

Early Preliminary Engineering Issues include:

- Location of Lincoln Harbor station
- Willamette Bridge vertical clearance
- SE 17th Ave station location(s)
- Elevated or at-grade McLoughlin crossing
- Park Ave Park & Ride configuration
- Willamette River bridge type

Middle of Preliminary Engineering (Target prior to July 2009) include:

- Multi-use (bike/pedestrian) paths through alignment
- SW Moody Street elevation
- Project wide storm water approach and treatment
- Supplemental safety measures SE 8-12th Ave. (train horn noise)
- SE Powell overpass assumptions

- Alternative bike route to SE 17th Ave
- SE 17th Ave streetscape and track treatment
- Environmental mitigation (type and locations)
- Streetcar scope in project (east and west)

Late Preliminary Engineering (Target prior to November 2009) include:

- Oversized freight route – SE Water
- Urban design elements in public right of way
- Lake Road station urban design treatments
- Milwaukie bus circulation
- Tacoma Park & Ride size and traffic mitigation
- Design treatment for Kellogg Creek bridge

Dave affirmed that staff would bring these issues back to the CAC at future meetings for full discussion.

Dee Walsh (CAC Member) asked if these issues run parallel to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Dave confirmed that in order for the FEIS to get started we have to have a good basis for design. For instance, at the Tacoma Park & Ride, we need to confirm the design to the extent that we can measure the potential environmental impacts. Design decisions need to be made in a timely manner so that we can proceed with the FEIS.

Dave directed the group to the “What’s Next” handout, which shows that we agree to the design before we do the FEIS. It’s important to get the design right in the beginning.

Frank Hemer (CAC Member) asked what the negative numbers on the Issues List mean.

Dave explained that the negative numbers represent savings. For instance, if an initial decision to build two stations changes to a decision to build only one station, there would be potentially a savings from the original estimate.

Sean Batty (TriMet Design Manager, West Segment) discussed a few specific issues from the list.

Vertical clearance for navigation of the Willamette River Bridge

Vertical clearance refers to the minimum distance between the bottom of the bridge and the ordinary low water line. It was decided that a 75-foot clearance is the minimum required. This assumption comes from matching the Sellwood Bridge clearance, analyzing data from existing river traffic, considering the usability of the bridge for pedestrians and bikes, the need to integrate the bridge design into the landside design, potential visual impact, etc. We need to revisit this assumption and finalize the minimum clearance requirement soon so bridge design can proceed.

Susan Pearce (CAC Member) asked if the American Disabilities Act (ADA) has been considered.

Sean affirmed that ADA requirements for slopes have been taken into consideration.

Bicycle and pedestrian path width on the Willamette River Bridge

We needed to determine what the minimum width should be. We are fairly certain that we want a path on both sides. We are basing costs at this point on 12-foot width on each side. The challenge is to balance the needs of bridge users with the cost, the project goal of building to Park Avenue, the FTA process, the bridge's integration into the landside, and environmental impact on the endangered salmon in the river, etc.

Lincoln/Harbor station location

Today we have identified three zones where the station could be built. There are implications with every station site to be considered. We must determine what is the optimal station location. The issues that are being considered are station access, cost, and urban design impacts.

Rick Williams (CAC Chair) noted that stakeholder groups will be created to focus on some of these specific issues. This process of vetting concerns through stakeholder groups will make the CAC's process more efficient. CAC Members should let staff know if they want to be involved with these stakeholder groups.

Leah Robbins (TriMet Director, East Segment) discussed a few specific issues from the list.

SE 17th Ave station locations

There are already a lot of people in the community involved in this discussion, and we will continue to reach out more. We've been looking at whether there should be a single station between the originally proposed Rhine and Holgate stations. Issues around this determination include station access, cost, property impacts, and urban design impacts, etc.

Teresa Boyle (City of Portland Light Rail Project Manager) directed the group to Exhibit C of the City's resolution adopting the LPA, which raised the question of station optimization at 17th Ave. This question came about because of issues with freight circulation at Holgate. To minimize potential conflicts among trucks, bikes and pedestrians, we're looking at moving the station further north, which creates a domino effect of issues to consider.

Dee Walsh (CAC Member) asked if reducing the number of stations impacts potential ridership.

Leah Robbins affirmed that potential ridership impacts, including transfers and walking distances are being considered.

Lance Lindahl (CAC Member) asked if there been any thought of combining the Harold and Holgate stations.

Dave Unsworth referred to the City of Portland's Exhibit C, which identifies Harold as a future station and recommends that "triggers" for its development be identified. This will involve modeling travel time, ridership on light rail, connections with buses, amount of user benefit, etc.

Staff confirmed that Exhibit C is included in the LPA report and will also be sent to the group.

Claudia Steinberg (TriMet Community Affairs Manager) provided a public involvement update.

As Rick mentioned, stakeholder groups will be formed around certain issues. For example, on the 17th Ave station location question, a broad group of folks will be convened including those active in the neighborhood, business owners and other interested parties.

The information we learn from the stakeholder meetings will be brought back to the CAC and all CAC members are encouraged to attend any stakeholder group meetings they're interested in. Contact Community Affairs staff for information:

- DeeAnn Sandberg – downtown Portland and SE Portland (west of 8th & Division)
- Jennifer Koozer – SE Portland (east of 8th & Division)
- Claudia Steinberg -- Milwaukie and Oak Grove

Susan Pearce (CAC Member) noted that apprehension is growing in the HAND neighborhood about train horn noise and traffic movement and parking around Clinton/Gideon Station, including concerns about pedestrian safety. This may warrant two specific groups to deal with these issues.

Claudia affirmed that staff will be looking to the CAC members for advice on who should be at the table for these targeted meetings.

Lina Bensel (CAC Member) asked for information about potential changes and transfer opportunities to bus lines 17, 19, and 70 when light rail service begins on 17th Avenue.

Dave Unsworth explained that the project will be looking at the overall bus network and especially what happens on the Ross Island Bridge. We are looking at the whole bus network and bringing that information back to you in more detail at a later meeting.

Claudia affirmed that staff will report back to the CAC each month about stakeholder groups we have met with. CAC members agreed that they want this meeting list as part of their packet each month.

Claudia also reminded the group about the upcoming open houses scheduled for Feb 20, March 4 and March 10.

Rob Barnard (TriMet West Segment Director) provided an update on the Willamette River Bridge study. Rob reminded the group that our charge is to deliver a bridge that embodies the Portland aesthetic, is functional and affordable. The bridge selection process has been a narrowing process. We started with “many” and now we are down to “few.”

The types remaining for consideration are:

- Wave frame
 - Cable-stayed (two-pier)
 - Cable-stayed (four-pier)
- (The through arch and tied arch types were eliminated as options.)

Conceptual design costs estimates for each type (in July 2009 values):

- Wave frame is \$176 million
- Two-pier cable-stayed is \$113 million
- Four-pier cable-stayed is \$102 million

Construction financing costs, extended construction duration, and steel escalation are not considered in these numbers.

The Willamette River Bridge Advisory Committee (WRBAC) agreed with the CAC that the wave frame type should be eliminated from consideration because of the risk factors. The recommendation is to advance the cable-stayed type design into Preliminary Engineering. Per the request of the WRBAC, a hybrid cable-stayed bridge design is also being advanced to explore its viability.

The bridge design will need to ensure customization, detail (integrated design), and deliver transparency and intimacy. Also, the bridge must respond to all contexts (i.e., fit into the site, reflect the community’s vision of what the bridge should be, and how a person experiences crossing the bridge on foot, bike, car, or train).

To summarize, the WRBAC wanted the Cable-Stayed bridge type to be advanced into PE and exploration of whether the hybrid design is a viable option. A cost and risk analysis will be part of this determination.

Lina Bensel (CAC Member) asked why a two-pier cable-stayed bridge would be more expensive than a four-pier cable-stayed bridge.

Rob Barnard explained that piers on land are easier and cheaper to build. Working in the river is more costly. Additionally, the four-pier bridge has a shorter span, which is also cheaper to build.

David Aschenbrenner (CAC Member) asked about height and river clearance, and whether those costs were estimated.

Rob Barnard explained that costs for all types were estimated with at least 75 feet of vertical clearance at mid-span.

Dee Walsh (CAC Member) asked if we have a cost estimate for the customization of the cable-stayed bridge.

Rob Barnard explained that costs for design don't always cost extra money to build. We won't know the specifics until we get into PE.

Valeria Ramirez (CAC Member) asked if uniqueness of the bridge still important.

Rick Williams affirmed that the hybrid bridge concept is a trade-off for people who wanted the wave frame.

Rob Barnard added that a self-anchored hybrid has been built within the last five years. We looked at a lot of data and determined the cost for a hybrid bridge was close enough to our budget to do a full analysis of cost and risk like we did with the other bridge types.

Valeria Ramirez (CAC Member) asked if all the cable-stayed bridge designs are equal with regard to safety, specifically bridge collapse.

Rob Barnard responded that suspension bridges go back to the Brooklyn Bridge so we have many examples to look to.

Henry Schmidt (CAC Member) commented that the hybrid is a self-anchored cable-stayed type, which is more risky because it hasn't been built as much as other types of suspension bridges.

Rob Barnard replied that a hybrid bridge has been built previously. Given the WRBAC's support, we will do a full analysis of cost and risk like we did with the other bridge types.

Rick Williams explained that he took the CAC's recommendation for a cable-stayed bridge type to the WRBAC. The next step is to go to the project's Steering Committee, the final arbiters on the decision. Rick asked the Steering Committee if the new hybrid design would have cost and risk concerns, and wrote a letter to restate the CAC's position. (A copy was in the meeting materials.) Rick asked the CAC for comments on the letter.

Valeria Ramirez (CAC Member) noted that the letter is long, and the points at the end get lost. She recommended that the parts about our process be removed, in order to emphasize the main points.

Barbara Dimick (CAC Member) added that we should reiterate that we are in agreement with the WRBAC, not in opposition.

Dee Walsh (CAC Member) added that we need to know if the details that need to be worked out on the hybrid bridge will raise the cost.

Frank Hemer (CAC Member) asked if we can we sell the name of the bridge.

Rod McDowell (CAC Member) replied that it's not a good idea to depend on money from fundraising. We need to plan for the whole project. If extra money comes in, great, but it's risky to rely on it.

Henry Schmidt (CAC Member) commented that spending extra money on the front end of this project does not work for the Oak Grove community because we are at the back end of the project. I don't want us to get short changed because of high costs at the beginning of the project.

Rick confirmed that he will take all the CAC's comments and re-draft the letter and send it the WRBAC.

Dana Lucero (Metro Public Involvement Specialist) asked the group to look at the Final Environmental Impact statement (FEIS): CAC Priority Topics handout. This is based on what we heard at the last meeting. Please take a look and let us know if anything should be changed.

Glen Ellis (Citizen) commented on the process for the 17th Avenue station location discussion. The process needs to be slowed down and there needs to be more outreach so all those who care about this issue can be involved.

Leah Robbins (TriMet East Segment Project Director) affirmed that while we do have targets for timelines on making some of these decisions, we are not going to speed a process up just to meet deadlines. The goal is to be sure that we gather the appropriate stakeholders together and if we cannot do that in a short period of time, we will take the time necessary to get the right people together.

Rick Williams (CAC Chair) closed the meeting, reminding the CAC to read the notes from past meetings and let us know if you have comments and changes.