

Tacoma Station Area Planning Meeting Notes

August 3, 2009

SMILE STATION

Purpose

Explore transit-supportive development opportunities around the future SE Tacoma Blvd light rail station and Park and Ride. Examine development potential that capitalizes on the location of the station and the adjacent Springwater Corridor.

Attendees:

- Community members representing City of Portland and City of Milwaukie neighborhoods and businesses.
- Staff representing City of Portland, City of Milwaukie, TriMet, Metro and Oregon Department of Transportation.

Feel of Station

- Link to Springwater Corridor high priority.
- Locate station closer to Springwater Corridor to provide bike access to station for non-transit users so recreational riders could avoid Tacoma.
- Maintain buffer between platforms and McLoughlin to avoid poor transit user experience (noise, pollution, vibration).
- Open space should be oriented to platform. This would increase “eyes and ears” aspect of safety.
- Avoid designing open space behind the garage or the Pendleton site. Keep it in view near the station and parking garage facing McLoughlin.
- Incorporate elegant lighting design to promote safety and a unique sense of place.
- Make the overall project pieces feel like they are objects in the landscape, rather than parked next to a creek (integrate Johnson Creek, linking elements throughout the site).
- Orient the courtyard towards station platforms where the people are going to be. Put retail-oriented development close to the platforms.
- Orient people toward views of green landscaping and the Pendleton site.
- Bringing human circulation to the outside of the garage structure could soften it, making the experience better and safer for all, and connect the landscape to the park-and-riders, and vice-versa, more successfully.
- Use green space close to Johnson Creek for picnics, etc.
- Since Johnson Creek is best part of area and an amenity for the neighborhood, why not take advantage by daylighting creek as was done in the Pearl District.

- The open space next to the platform and garage should be well lit, inviting, have a plaza and green space. Could serve as waiting area to supplement platform.
- Incorporate viewpoints into Johnson Creek.
- Green space should be theme of site. Create some hanging gardens to green-up structure.
- Preference for concept “C” because you get more open spaces.
- Plant red oaks along the front of the site like rest of McLoughlin carry that theme throughout the site will help slow traffic.
- Concern about isolation of the “quick drop” area on the east side of the garage.
- Desire major plaza, or wide sidewalks off the Springwater Trail to the station area. Make it attractive; establish as a pedestrian corridor by itself. Create a loop around Springwater Trail north by the site, up to Tacoma connecting to Sellwood
- Integrate public art into the site. Compliment Johnson Creek’s central features and materials.
- Add sidewalks from Tacoma to the site.
- Change name from “Tacoma Station” to “Johnson Creek Station”.
- Change name to “Springwater Station” to engender place making and to reflect the nexus with a major pedestrian and bicycle corridor.
- Sellwood and Milwaukie are older communities so use traditional elements and architecture.
- Provide shelters from inclement weather.

Physical Design/Scale of Garage

- Good that garage is not in the middle of residential neighborhood—fits with existing industrial use.
- A portion of the garage wall should/could extend to the street as a continuation of the neighboring building’s frontage line in order to establish a street wall, and carry over character-giving design elements from the existing structure.
- If we leave retail out of site, can we make Park and Ride garage lower?
- Prefer “airport” parking “green” structure treatment.
- Incorporate “Nature in Neighborhood” themes on garage and site
- Design garage layout so people exit out the closest side and walk around building, rather than walking through the garage similar to Adidas’ parking garage in north Portland.
- Is it possible to step down building height closer to neighborhoods and higher in the center?
- Due to high water table and cost considerations, it is not a viable strategy to go below grade to construct underground parking levels at this garage site.
- Light pollution concerns. If the roof is used for parking, lighting needs to be heavily mitigated to minimize impacts on nearby residential properties.
- Include some green roof in terracing structure.
- Green roof on garage would be positive.
- Use berm to screen building from McLoughlin. Needs to be green and natural.
- Garage should have “bump outs” like Park Ave garage design.

- Is it possible to make parking garage smaller by half?
- Need balance of parking over entire light rail alignment.
- Preference for option C – putting the structure at an angle to McLoughlin – because it creates more interesting open spaces.
- Preference for L shaped structure.
- L shape has better retail appeal.
- Don't like garage "box" look—want a visual buffer, would rather have an extra floor.
- Make building architecturally interesting.
- Prefer building off McLoughlin.
- Architecture should reflect Johnson Creek.
- Mural of Johnson Creek on parking garage.
- Big box needs plantings to soften edges.

Other Uses for Station and Park and Ride

- Look at brew pub!

Pedestrians/Bikes

- Need pedestrian overpass over McLoughlin to access neighborhoods and businesses to the west (Umatilla is designated Sellwood bike path).
- Need easy access from neighborhood to Springwater Corridor to improve access to Tacoma station.
- Consider new signal at Umatilla to provide direct pedestrian station access to affordable housing to the west. This could also help alleviate morning traffic backup on the northbound onramp from Tacoma onto McLoughlin.
- Improved bike and pedestrian access with multiple access points. Include wide pathways, nice surface to Springwater Corridor.
- Enhance lighting of Springwater Corridor and its connection to the station.
- Need amenities to make walking more attractive.
- Car/bike & pedestrian passenger "split" at station is roughly 60/40 (some skepticism at public meeting to this estimate, but Metro projections are 58% car, 34% bike and pedestrian and 8% bus transfer).
- Well lit and covered, but open walkway.
- Make sure pedestrians are visible and don't feel vulnerable when walking from the east.
- Make sure station is visible from ped/bike paths.
- Create priority parking for bikes near platforms.
- Need restrooms for cyclists.
- Access over the Tacoma overcrossing involves a fairly steep climb. There is not access to the Springwater Trail between the site and SE 17th. It will be important to improve access for people who live in apartments and houses on the west side of McLoughlin.

Safety and Security

- Security cameras need person watching 24/7
- Currently crime along heavy rail tracks.
- Need landscaping to be low for crime prevention.
- Need lighting/motion activated
- Springwater Trail needs improvements – lighting, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). To the east of the site, the trail is dark and isolated.

Parking/Traffic

- Traffic bottleneck on McLoughlin between 7-9 am and 5-6 pm.
- Concern about “cut through” traffic in neighborhood.
- Concern about traffic across Tacoma/Sellwood going to Park & Ride from Lake Oswego.? East Moreland? King Road?
- Access concerns northbound on McLoughlin. Question as to when McLoughlin gets built to three lanes.
- Already lots of accidents at southbound onramp off Tacoma.
- If all “quick drop” spaces are full, there is no way to cycle through the site without getting on McLoughlin and traveling out of direction.
- Concerns about traffic congestion along Tacoma.
- Concern that garage parking demand will be high and garage will fill quickly resulting in parking spilling into neighborhoods.
- Concerned about traffic from Happy Valley traveling down Johnson Creek Blvd to access Tacoma Park & Ride.
- Metro is underestimating traffic destination/attraction.

Transit Oriented Development

- Is it possible to rebuild Bishop site without losing character?
- Set the stage for bicycle-oriented redevelopment/reuse (e.g. incubator space) of Pendleton site with bike station/valet on TriMet property. Seek out local/nonprofit partner (BTA, Community Cycling Center, Citybikes) to sponsor and maintain it.
- TriMet is not great at retail (i.e. Beaverton Round).
- Capture transit-oriented development potential on the west side of McLoughlin. This side of the corridor is closer to existing residential densities and is “on the way home,” thereby attracting vehicular, transit and even bicycle commuters. New development could be tied to the station via the existing public investment in the Springwater Bridge over McLoughlin.
- Right in and right out access is not favorable to retail.

- Pendleton concerned about parking on the north side of their building, need room for driveway (employees retail etc.) currently need place to park—potentially behind the building. How does it work with Springwater?
- If such development is not viable at this time, possibly create a setback from the street to anticipate a commercial component at a future time.

General Comments

- Bybee Station issues: overpass was just rebuilt, need pull outs on Bybee bridge, below grade station could result in a lawsuit due to safety concerns (shrubby is overgrown, empty space, concern about emergency access and wetlands).