

DIVISION TRANSIT PROJECT POLICY AND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday June 15, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
St. Philip Neri, 2408 SE 16th Avenue, Portland, OR 97214

POLICY & BUDGET MEMBERS PRESENT

Neil McFarlane, General Manager, TriMet

Art Pearce, Policy, Planning and Projects Group Manager, Portland Bureau of Transportation

Karylenn Echols, Councilor, City of Gresham

Shirley Craddick, Councilor, Metro

Nathan Clark, Policy Adviser, Multnomah County

Kelly Brooks, District 1 Policy and Development Manager, ODOT

Chabre Vickers, Representative, Project Community Advisory Committee

Rick Bartko, Representative, Project Community Advisory Committee

Welcome

Neil McFarlane opened the meeting with introductions of the committee members.

Mr. McFarlane went on to speak about the history of the project. He clarified that the committee would be meeting to be kept informed and up-to-date on the details of the project. TriMet is in the midst of outreach to make sure that citizens are also informed and involved with the development of the project.

Mr. McFarlane went over the meeting agenda and opened the meeting to public comment.

Comments from the Public

Doug Allen

Comments attached.

Ian Stude, Portland State University

Mr. Stude represents Portland State University, who has 29,000 students and 4,000 faculty and staff. The University is thrilled about the Division Transit Project. This project will be creating an education corridor connecting community colleges with PSU and OHSU. This will create greater connectivity between campuses. Mr. Stude mentioned how important connectivity was for the students. PSU has had a many year process about how to integrate and deliver education to students. They work with PCC to develop programs that take the bumps and seams out of the transition from their college into the University and further into post-graduate work. Through their new enrollment program, PSU now has a greater number of students enrolled, so there really is a substantial number of students moving in between both campuses as part of their education in pursuit of their future prosperity. He sees this project as having a very strong impact on students who are coping with the rise in the cost of education and they can save on time and money with this connectivity.

Jim Howell

Mr. Howell stated that the purpose of any project is to grow ridership. That is the most important issue. He stated that ridership on Line 4 has declined by two percent over the last five years, six percent in the last year. The line is going in the wrong direction. Ridership should be number one and there are some very simple principles to make sure ridership increases. Mr. Howell said that the agency needs to have a

system, it has to include connectivity, it has to improve frequency of service and reliability of service and the agency must improve span of service. There are other things involved in this project, but they are less important. Image or branding is not an important issue. Focus on fancy bus stops is not important. These are not the things to get people on buses. Therefore, if you are funding this you need to focus on what is going to increase ridership

Thomas Becker

Mr. Becker started getting emails about this project a few years ago. Every time staff sends out a flyer, it changes the stops. Every single time. Every time he calls, he gets a different person and no one lives in his area. He lives east of 122nd Avenue. He has noticed some improvements with the lights, but the lights do not start until 148th Avenue. TriMet needs them from 82nd Avenue, east. Apparently, according to the literature, two signals are going to be installed or are in the works. His stop is at a signal. It is a prime place for a stop. It has a garbage can, but it is a prime place for a stop. None of the project literature has his stop. That does not make sense to him. Then the project is going to put in a stop at 127th, where there is no room for a stop. He understands that TriMet wants something near the Multnomah County clinic, but there is a flashing light there. It seems like since nobody lives in that area the project will not be able to properly address this stuff. Mr. Becker believes that the project has not been scoped out well enough.

A committee member asked Mr. Becker what to which stop he was referring.

Mr. Becker said he lived at 130th Avenue and Division. Furthermore he mentioned that across the street from him was a huge apartment complex for low-income immigrants. They not going to know about this stuff.

Mr. McFarlane let Mr. Baker know that he agreed with him. Everyone needs to know about the project and TriMet's community committee will be knocking on doors.

Michael Harrison, OHSU

Mr. Harrison stated that he is the representative for OHSU on the project's Community Advisory Committee. OHSU has approximately 15,000 employees on Markum Hill, connected by the Tram to the South Waterfront and Tilikum Crossing. OHSU has a great number of middle-income jobs in a country where middle-income jobs are diminishing. To have accessibility to those jobs for people who live outside the corridor to Gresham is very important to OHSU. They want those folks to have access to employment opportunities as much as possible. The same is true for the hospital patient care. Having quick and reliable service to OHSU is important.

Presentation on Division Transit Project overview

Michael Kiser, Project Manager for the Division Transit Project, presented on the project schedule, scope and budget for the committee. He discussed some of the characteristics of the project and the status. As of this meeting, the project is finalizing 10% design cost estimate and preliminary Value Engineering.

Michael also let the committee know that the project has confirmed Tilikum Crossing as the river crossing for the bus. This bridge crossing was the preferred option in the Locally Preferred Alternative, but concerns were raised about the reliability of the bus when crossing the railroad tracks at 8th Avenue. Project staff conducted a traffic analysis and findings showed that the bus should not be stuck at the crossing during peak hours.

Michael discussed how the work for the project had been done collaboratively with regional partners to design and deliver the project with integrity, transparency and accountability.

A committee member asked about the fleet type of the buses and the viability of electric buses.

Michael Kiser said that the project is leaving the option open for electric fleet. There is no manufacturer that meets the standards and can deliver the reliability that the project needs for the purchase of 33 vehicles. There is very little time for procurement by the beginning of next year. Cost is very important. However, all those options will be under consideration.

Presentation on Division Transit Project station locations

James McGrath, CH2M Design Team Lead for the Division Transit Project, presented on the current design of the project and potential changes from the Locally Preferred Alternative. He discussed how the design team has been framing their work and gave the committee a preview of what changes would be discussed at the Community Advisory Committee that evening.

James went into the changes to design since the Metro-led Powell-Division steering committee recommended the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the new Division Transit Project in November 2016. The design team has spent six months exploring design scenarios for station locations along the 14-mile corridor.

To achieve a balance of optimal performance with existing opportunities and constraints, the team considered factors including community impacts, ridership, station spacing proximity, operational constraints and multimodal safety.

James transitioned the presentation into the relocated and removed stations. He discussed the stations that are recommended to be shifted or relocated. Shifted stations include:

- **Division & 43rd Ave. (previously 45th Ave.):** Preferred option preserves ridership and Lift service at 43rd Ave; also avoids right-of-way and driveway impacts of alternate location at 45th Ave. Preferred option requires no changes to current traffic operations.
- **Division & 87th Ave. (previously 85th Ave.):** Preferred option selected to avoid left turn prohibitions. Alternative site would have required physical median and creating access restrictions. The preferred option uses the existing signalized intersection. Alternative site was far from the 87th intersection requiring long distance to cross street or addition of new midblock crossing.
- **Division & 130th Ave. (previously 127th Ave.):** Relocated to prevent extensive out of direction travel for a multi-family housing development, and removal of access to a business. There is higher ridership at 130th Ave due to its proximity to David Douglas High School, the largest high school in Oregon. Safer pedestrian crossings and multi-modal intersection exist at 130th Ave.
- **Division & 168th Ave. (previously 167th Ave.):** Preferred option selected in order to avoid right-of-way impacts to gas station (and potential hazardous material mitigation) and this option also has fewest driveway closures.
- **Division & Eastwood (previously Gresham-Fairview Trail):** Low ridership at Gresham-Fairview Trail site in comparison to nearby Eastwood site, and not close to businesses or popular destinations. Moved to serve high ridership and lifts near Grocery Outlet. Eastwood will have a full intersection to control pedestrian, bus and vehicular movements.
- **Division & Angeline (previously Bella Vista):** Preferred option moved station to Angeline due to sight distance concerns for bus operators at Bella Vista.

- **Division & Civic Drive (previously Wallula/212th):** Preferred option selected to minimize ROW impacts of moving bikes behind platforms. In addition, moving bikes behind platforms would have impacted more light poles and required additional retaining walls.

Removed stations include:

- **Division & 109th Ave.:** Community had voiced anticipated opportunity for future land use transformation at the quarry located at 109th Ave. However, the options for this station eliminated left turns into the quarry and numerous other businesses along the south side. It also impacted the parking access to a business. Moving away from these impacts placed potential station locations within one block of the 112th Ave. station and 101st Ave. station.
- **Division & 119th Ave.:** Station placement in the eastbound direction at 119th Ave. would foul Transit Signal Priority on the approach to 122nd Ave. Station also shows high ridership only in offs for eastbound travel, which could be attributed to riders getting off before 122nd Ave. due to rush hour congestion.
- **Division & 139th Ave.:** This option removed the center turn lane, restricted left turn movements and narrowed travel lanes near the pedestrian crossing. Impacts put the station platforms too close to nearby station locations.
- **Division & 190th Ave.:** Originally selected to avoid “gaps” between stations, but station placement would impact driveways, front lawns and circulation. The current stop also has low ridership.

James also discussed a new station added:

- **NE 8th St. & Cleveland Ave.:** Added due to operational constraints at Gresham Transit Center.

After James’ presentation, Michael added that there would be an open house on the June 29th and online open house online for comments and community involvement. He also announced the monthly CAC meetings that evening.

A committee member asked if the removal of stations would free up funds for other stations or projects.

Michael said that it would not open up funding. None of the stations presented on were removed due to funding, but problems with locations.

A committee member asked if due to limited funding, more stations would be eliminated.

Michael stated that no other stations are planned to be removed. He thinks that the project will be able to get where it needs to be without eliminating more stations.

A committee member asked if other than the open houses and CAC meetings, if there would be other opportunities for the community to follow what is going on.

Michael Kiser said that the project is only at 15% design, so there will still be a lot of room for comments and review from the community.

Wendy Serrano, Community Affairs Representative for TriMet, added that there will be a chance to comment online and the project will have another open house in the fall. Community Affairs will also be making visits to community groups and anyone who wants to be heard.

A committee member requested that CAC meetings be held prior to the policy and budget committee so that members can discuss topics beforehand.

A committee member suggested having open houses in a more centralized location.

Coral Egnew, Senior Community Affairs Coordinator for TriMet, announced that the notes and presentations for all CAC meetings and the open house will be online. She also let the committee know that the CAC meetings and open house would be held at Portland Community College on 82nd and Division, which is a more centralized location.

Mr. McFarlane closed the meeting saying that there will be another Policy and Budget Committee meeting in the fall.