

DIVISION TRANSIT PROJECT COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, January 18, 2018, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Portland Community College, 2305 SE 82nd Ave, Portland, OR 97216

CAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Chabre Vickers, Portland Community College Southeast (PCC) (Committee Chair)
Rick Bartko, Division Midway Alliance (DMA)
Claudia Robertson, TriMet Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT)
John Carr, Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Coalition (SEUL); Portland Clean Air
Jef Kaiser, Gresham Coalition of Neighborhoods
Sydney Mead, Division Clinton Business Association (DCBA)
Thuy Tu, Jade District/APANO
Teresa Keishi Soto, East Portland Action Plan (EPAP)
Carol Fenstermacher, Centennial School District

Absent

Michael Harrison, Oregon Health Science University (OHSU)

Welcome

Chabre Vickers opened the meeting. She welcomed and introduced Theresa Keishi Soto, who is replacing Kem Marks as the EPAP representative on the committee. She invited the CAC to review the notes from the previous meeting for approval to post online.

Comments from the Public

Andy West

Mr. West lives at 51st Avenue and Division. He has two children, one in elementary school and one in middle school. He is concerned about his children's safety if TriMet places a stop on the West Side of 52nd. It may confuse his children when crossing the street. Mr. West also believes that removing parking will be a problem because it is already a problem today.

Sebastian Fiddler

Mr. Fiddler is a neighbor of Mr. West's at 51st and Division. He believes that moving the stop to 51st Avenue will increase noise pollution and litter. He suggests that the stop be moved closer to 50th Avenue because there are more commercial spaces there and bike stops on the east side.

Ella Shriner and Zella Lobo

Ms. Shriner and Ms. Lobo are from Grant High School's Portland Youth Planet Council Working Crew. They attended this meeting in order to strongly encourage the committee to push towards electric buses. Ms. Shriner takes the MAX to school every day, as do many of her classmates. Electric buses are safer for the environment and cause less pollution than diesel buses. She was invited to speak by the Climate Justice Club.

Project Budget

Steve Witter, Capital Projects & Construction Division Executive Director, welcomed the community to the first meeting of 2018. He announced the project had reached 30% design and this is where all of the real costs of the project are revealed. He let the committee know that they would hear more about the project design at this meeting and about some of the budget challenges the project is facing. He thanked the Grant High School students for coming to the meeting. He also announced by fall, TriMet will be putting five new electric buses on the streets through a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Chabre Vickers stated that we will continue to have Electric Bus updates even though it is not feasible to work the purchase of the buses into the current project budget.

Project Design & Scope

Michael Kiser, Project Manager, discussed the current project budget after the 30% design was submitted. He summarized the current project budget cap of \$175 million with a 50% local match. The project currently has a \$6 million local funding deficit, which the project is looking to fill with our jurisdictional partners. TriMet feels confident that the gap will be filled.

Michael presented the committee with the current cost estimation after 30% design. He stated that the current budget estimate is approximately \$189 million, or \$14 million over the cap.

The project also has another milestone coming up, the President's Budget. TriMet was expecting that to occur on February 15th. Based on conversations with our federal partners in Washington D.C., it appears that there is a good possibility that no Small Starts projects will get into the President's Budget this year. This is not a reflection of the project's competitiveness. As a comparison, no Small Starts projects were funded in 2017.

Michael discussed the shortfall with the committee, explaining if the project is funded this year, there is still a \$14 million gap. However, if the project is delayed another year, there would be a shortfall of \$20 million. The increase is based on a \$6 million escalation.

In light of the current budget deficit, the project is looking at a recalibration. It is not about cutting project scope, but prioritizing the things necessary and fundamental for transit performance and meeting the project goals. The recalibration will be a pause on the advancement in design. It is a process where TriMet will work with partners and the CAC to get to a point where everyone feels comfortable before moving to 60% design.

Chabre Vickers asked if the recalibration happens before February or if the project team will be in the midst of it by the next meeting. She wanted to know if the committee would be presented with different options with or without the \$6 million escalation.

Michael said that the team was focused on getting something that worked with all partners, but most likely assuming the \$6 million escalation.

Chabre Vickers clarified that she wanted to know if the recalibration would reflect a deficit of \$20 million.

Michael said that she was correct. The team wants to be aggressive at this time because waiting until 60% design will only make the budget more difficult to meet. This is the time to try and go back and review the process and make changes.

Michael continued on with his presentation and discussed the process that would take place during the recalibration. He stated that the recalibration would focus on what is essential to deliver the transit project and make sure that it would retain performance and reliability. He also said that TriMet is looking to ensure that this project is replicable as a regional transportation tool.

Jef Kaiser asked for an example on the transfer of infrastructure that Michael discussed.

Michael responded an example would be if the Division Transit Project found another project doing work in the area. There may be opportunities where the partners deliver some elements of the project now to keep the project moving because delays incur future escalation costs.

Rick Bartko said that in the last meeting it seemed that we were up to the number, but today the team is saying that we are \$14 million over. He wants to know what changed.

Michael explained that once the project reached 30% design, costs for building platforms as designed were calculated and came out to be more expensive than anticipated. However it was better to find that out now instead of later at 60% design, when it is harder to make these sort of changes.

Rick Bartko also asked about the anticipated escalation. He asked if the \$175 million budget takes escalation into account, does the \$175 million increase to \$181 million.

Michael responded that the \$175 million is a cap and will remain the same.

John Carr asked that if the schedule was pushed out a year, would the actual launch of the project be pushed out a year as well.

Michael responded that the launch would not necessarily be pushed out a full year because there is a buffer put in place for construction. It may move out a little bit, but not a full year.

John Carr asked if there are any aspects of the project that will not be touched during recalibration.

Michael said that there are things that will not be changed, but all aspects of the project will be looked at during the recalibration.

John Carr asked what kind of feedback the project was looking for from the committee at this point.

Michael responded that since everyone is coming back from the holiday, they just wanted to roll everything out so everyone can see where we are today.

Claudia Robertson asked Michael if they are taking the universal design into consideration during the recalibration. If the project changes, say, the height of some of the platforms. It could impact dwell time and expenses that may not be beneficial for the project as a whole.

Michael said that accessibility and universal design are very important. The project will continue to focus on universal design so the stations are legible and accessible. Michael agreed that station height does have a trickle down impact into performance.

Electric Bus Update

Brenda Martin, Community Affairs Representative, discussed how last month TriMet finished the electric bus feasibility analysis. The analysis found that it is physically feasible to have electric buses along this corridor. Currently TriMet is performing more analysis on the cost benefit of purchasing electric buses and how long they would take to pay off within their life cycle. Agency wide there is also a system wide analysis being done to see if TriMet could change the entire fleet to electric buses and how long that might take. Brenda clarified that the potential for electrification of buses is not subject to the Division Transit Project \$175 million budget cap. The extra cost of electrification would need to come from a different funding source.

Chabre Vickers asked if the recalibration will push out the procurement of buses for the project.

Michael said that there would likely be an impact to the procurement and it would be pushed out. This would allow for more development and information on electric buses.

Report on November 30% Design Open Houses

Coral Egnew, Senior Community Affairs Coordinator, presented a review of the open houses that occurred in November. She let the committee know that the open houses were promoted in seven community newspapers, postcards were mailed to over 5,700 properties along Division Street and the project website was updated. Over 220 attendees attended the three in-person open houses. The online open house was active from November 13 through November 27, 2017.

Coral also presented the top three topics received at the open houses. They included:

- Desire for dedicated bus lanes, slower auto speeds and buffered bike/pedestrian infrastructure, especially in East Portland
- Desire to relocate the station at SE 51st Avenue to SE 50th Avenue and Division, a hub where there is density, commercial uses and future development
- Possible inadequate access for seniors and people with disabilities due to distances between stations.

Jef Kaiser asked how citizen involvement will be incorporated during the recalibration. He wanted to know if there would be more open houses.

Coral responded that it will depend on decisions made during the recalibration. It is likely a public open house will occur to share the results of the recalibration.

Public Comment

Allison Whiley

Ms. Whiley lives a few blocks from PCC. She has conducted a lot of research on electric buses. She said that she came to advocate the Division Transit Project press for Electric buses on the basis of community health, the lifetime of the buses and climate control. The initial costs are more than diesel buses, but the maintenance and fuel costs are much less. She wants to know by the next CAC meeting how the Division Transit Project is going to respond to Executive Order 1721, it is the policy of the State of Oregon to establish an aggressive timeline to achieve a statewide goal of 50,000 or more registered and operating electric vehicles by 2020.

Laura Bean

Ms. Bean is the store manager of Salt and Straws on SE Division. She came to speak on behalf of moving the bus at 34th Ave. It is a very busy and robust area. She asked the committee to please take into consideration the businesses in that area. Removing trees and keeping the sidewalks clean all impact the businesses.

Peter Stark

Mr. Stark represents the Central Eastside Industrial Council. They have more than 1,200 businesses and 19,000 employees. He wanted to express the councils concern about the ability to travel from eastbound SE Division to northbound 12th Avenue. This change is a red flag for the businesses in the area.

Brad Smith

Mr. Smith is a property owner at 34th Avenue and Division. He is concerned by the move of the bus stop to the west side of the intersection. The move will cause harm to the businesses there and make traffic worse. There will be an increase in accidents there. The businesses want to maintain vitality and livability of their community. So in the analysis don't just consider cost, consider the vitality of the neighborhood as well.

Henry Wharton

Mr. Warton is a member of the Environmental Justice Club at Grant High School. He came to advocate for the use of electric buses on Division Street to increase the quality of life and the quality of public transit in general in the region.

Kalondra Anderson

Ms. Anderson is also a member of her high school's Eco Club. She came to advocate for the electrification of buses for Portland. She hopes of spreading it to other communities and believes that Portland should set a good example.

Jan Zuckerman

Ms. Zuckerman is one of the teachers at Grant High School. She supports the electrification of buses to protect the environment and fight against climate change. If Portland does not take actions against the natural disasters that we have been witnessing lately, things will only get worse.

Committee Roundtable

Chabre Vickers opened the floor to the committee for a roundtable discussion.

Rick Bartko requested that a chart be made to see whose doing what and when between all of the partners working on this project and how they are interacting throughout the city of Portland. This would help the community to understand the timeline. It is all about collaboration, collaboration, collaboration.

Sydney Mead asked how the committee will be kept in the loop about the recalibration and at what point will they be asked to weigh in. Or will they only be presented with a final recommendation.

Michael said that they will likely get some things piece by piece but the first step in the recalibration is to make sure that whatever is presented to the committee is viable with the project partners.

John Carr wanted to reiterate that when the recalibration and reassessment occurs, that the community be taken into consideration as much as the economic assessment.