



Event summary

Community planning forum, Oct. 9, 2012

The second community planning forum for the Southwest Corridor Plan was held on Oct. 9, 2012. Twenty-five community members attended this meeting held at the Multnomah Arts Center in Southwest Portland. The majority of attendees were from Southwest Portland and Tigard. There was less representation from the southern end of the corridor due to less promotion as well as many other events and issues taking place in those communities at the time.

The main objective of this meeting was to receive public input on which transit alternatives and road projects to move forward for further analysis. Key stakeholders and engaged community members discussed 10 transit projects and reviewed a list of over 170 road projects. These discussions took place in four small groups. The outcomes of this event were shared with the project steering committee at the Oct. 22 meeting and provided insight for the decision-makers. A summary of the discussions that took place at the community planning forum follows.

Transit

The main theme for the transit discussions was for the plan to find a balance between mobility and development in the corridor. Groups expressed the need for further examination of bus rapid transit and light rail options to better understand the costs and benefits of each. Also reflected was the notion of focusing on creating transportation connections, such as linking local bus routes to any high capacity transit line.

There was significant interest in examining bus rapid transit, which was viewed as a feasible, short-term transit solution for the corridor. Groups were interested in seeing tangible examples of bus rapid transit in other areas of the country and what it would be like in the corridor to better inform the decision-making process. There was concern that a bus rapid transit line would run in existing lanes of traffic and for the potential for increased congestion that this may create. Groups proposed that the solution to this problem would be to ensure that bus rapid transit would operate on its own right of way.

There was also support for further consideration of light rail as an option, and groups noted that light rail was most likely the future transportation vision in the corridor. In addition, groups indicated that, in considering light rail options, it would be important to be realistic about funding as well as scaling down costs in comparison to past regional light rail models.

Roadway projects

Groups discussed several specific roadway projects that they felt needed further consideration in the evaluation process. These concerns mainly focused on redefining large scale projects to make them more feasible in the short or medium term. The Dartmouth Extension was cited as a project

that needed to be redefined in the short or medium term in order to reduce costs while still addressing the major bottleneck and traffic issues in the area. Additionally, groups noted that shorter-term, smaller fixes were important in considering roadway projects on Highway 217 as well as I-5 at 26th Avenue. Finally, the Bertha Boulevard extension project was not supported by neighbors.

Investment strategies

Investment strategies discussions highlighted the importance of balancing needs, between the short and long term, large and small scale, and people and businesses, without precluding the future vision.

Groups expressed a vision for the corridor where biking, walking and transit were linked. In addition, groups highlighted the importance of examining options that would connect key destinations, such as OHSU, downtown Portland and Barbur Boulevard. Transit was presented as an opportunity to catalyze development in the corridor, and groups acknowledged the importance of large investment in jump starting the development process. Groups noted that investors benefit from having some certainty that “it’s coming” in order to make a commitment.

Southwest Corridor October 9 Community Planning Forum Notes (in full)

TABLES # 1 & 2:

Transit Projects

- BRT
 - BRT priority is good—needs to be studied further
 - Converting a lane for BRT use
 - Concerning because Barbur is a safety valve—many sections of Barbur can't handle losing a lane
 - Must consider what reducing a lane for BRT would do in terms of traffic congestion/constriction. Specifically for the Taylors Ferry neighborhood and those neighborhoods directly surrounding I-5
 - Could the retained hillside along I-5 be utilized for an additional lane?
 - BRT needs to operate on its own direct right of way
 - BRT express bus could be overlain on LRT lines, heading out further beyond the realm of LRT
 - Find ways to link with layered LRT and local bus service
 - Examine BRT on shared lanes to Sherwood
 - Local bus enhancement also needs to be studied further
- Streetcar to Sherwood
 - Should be deferred
 - Rapid streetcar cars are too small to support HCT and are therefore not cost effective
 - Streetcar would be a good circulator but not a viable corridor option
 - Streetcar would have to function as LRT within the corridor, thus makes more sense to implement LRT.
- LRT to Tigard and extension of LRT to Tualatin
 - If it's possible financially to implement it should be considered
 - Need to be realistic about funding and change in federal match; LRT would require 50% local match.
 - Should try to push back on cost by scaling it down from past LRT models (i.e. Milwaukie line)
 - No real need for LRT beyond Terwilliger
 - LRT doesn't offer much that BRT couldn't feasibly do—need further examination of LRT v. BRT
 - Should examine storm water comparisons of LRT v. BRT
 - Should consider LRT option going to Washington Square via Multnomah Ave., which could then connect with WES
- Directly linking OHSU with regional mass transit
 - OHSU needs to be a high priority in SW Corridor plan
 - Need to look at Kelly focus area—how do you get from downtown to Barbur?
 - Need a direct connection from HCT station on Barbur to OHSU
 - Examine implementing an incline elevator from OHSU to Barbur

Roadway Projects

- Roadways projects to leave as is
 - 1130 124th Ave.
 - 5001 extension of Brockman to Hall Blvd.
 - 1073 72nd Ave./Upper Boones Ferry Road
 - 1051 Auxiliary lane on 1-5 between Haines St. and Kruse Way/72nd St.
 - 5002 Davies Rd. multimodal street extension
 - 1082 Bonita Road widening: Hall to Bangy
 - 1090 Greenburg intersection improvements
 - 1097 Hall Blvd. extension
- Roadway projects to review/question
 - 1083 Dartmouth St. widening
 - 1084 Dartmouth St. extension
- Important to examine roadway projects that seek to balance the system.

Investment Strategies

- Focus on areas we want to become “special”—areas for opportunity
 - Have to balance “special” areas with surroundings and connections
- Should catalyze development with transit
 - Need alignment for HCT to determine needs and development/redevelopment focus areas for investment.
 - Need some public investment to get it going, but major infusion can come later
 - Need some certainty that “it’s coming” in order for investors to make a commitment
- Linking active transportation to transit options
 - Connections to transit infrastructure with communities along the way

TABLE # 3:

Transit Projects

- Wouldn’t want BRT to mimic LRT:
 - LRT stops too often
 - Transit should be faster than traffic
 - Transit should be cheaper than driving and parking
 - MAX has too many stops- example – Sunset to Orenco
 - There needs to be a balance between mobility and development
 - Questioned removal of I-5 options – they could spur development in focus areas if people choose to live there because of improved transit to employment areas
- BRT
 - A lot of people don’t understand what BRT represents
 - Metro needs to provide tangible examples
 - LRT = another fight, so moving forward with alternative options (like BRT) will diffuse the arguments

- BRT should have fewer stops- 12 Express was fast (line 94), but service has been cut from Sherwood to Tigard
- Should be a WES stop @ Bridgeport (72nd/Durham Road). (Ensuing discussion about why WES is recommended long-term, i.e. separate corridor including Beaverton/Hillsboro). It was explained that another WES stop *might* be addressed in TriMet's SW Corridor enhancement plan, but generally an enhancement plan is about local bus service

Roadway Projects

- Hall Blvd @ Greenburg Rd – bump out in front of Bank of America is a safety issue. Not sure if it's in project list – 1090? 5033? 1099?
- General comments that too many projects on list to think about; wished list were provided earlier.

Investment Strategies

- Money is tight, people are grumpy. We've seen penny-wise and pound foolish before; let's try to make decisions that will serve us in the short/ midterm but not preclude future improvements. I.e. BRT that could convert to LRT. We need to maintain flexibility as we build in the short/mid-term
- All out balance. Short vs. long-term; people vs. businesses. Let's not pit big projects vs. small projects, but do some of both.
- Parks/greens pace has tremendous potential – slopes on Barbur could have trees that green and abate noise. Example is Burnham St off Main St in Tigard. Ron Bunch talked about connecting the green dots in Tigard. Pacific Hwy could be "boulevard-ed" with trees planted.
- We need more public/private partnerships to build more affordable housing along transit, such as senior/mixed housing.

TABLE #4:

Transit Projects

- There was a consensus to keep the LRT projects in the mix for further study. This was viewed as the long-term future of the corridor even if BRT was the shorter term
- ROW for dedicated transit should be bought now for the future (whether it's used for BRT or LRT)
- Project should look at feasibility of a tunnel for HCT starting at the National College of Natural Medicine off Naito

Roadway Projects

- #1052 Bertha Blvd Extension: this project would NOT be supported by the neighborhood. It would take out businesses and should not be moved forward
- #1084 Dartmouth St Extension/217 crossing – while too expensive as defined, this area is a major bottleneck and congestion point. A smaller set of projects in the area should be looked at for short/medium term

- Hwy 217 projects – there are numerous Hwy 217 road projects in the LT category. They have high price tags. However, shorter term projects should be identified, particularly for the 217/72nd Ave area, which is a main congestion point
- # 1037 I-5 at 26th Avenue – a smaller version of this project should be in the short to mid-term category. The full long-term 4-point interchange is estimated to cost \$86 million. The table participants believe an on-ramp to SB I-5 only is a better project and would cost less than \$40 million. That would potentially allow the removal of the ramp at Capitol Highway and put the project in the short- to mid-term.

Investment Strategies

- Want to see HCT down to Tigard to improve health, prosperity and mobility in the corridor. He moved to Portland in large part because of its transportation system and now that he lives and works in Tigard, he wants the same for that area.
- There's not a lot of new area to develop so we should focus on improving what we have and redeveloping existing assets. We need to address the transit corridors as they currently exist. Get people out of their cars. Make big investments to do this. Build rail down the middle of Barbur if it's necessary to get this done.
- We need some big investments plus a lot of smaller ones. Bus service has been destroyed in SW at the expense of light rail. Bus rapid transit could be great for SW. HCT needs a better feeder network to bring people to the main transit lines. People should pay for parking at park-and-rides.
- Parks should be for everyone's use. Don't like the acquisition of land simply for watershed use (i.e. Places that citizens can't access)

General Project Notes:

- #5006 (short/mid-term): This project is not described correctly. It should describe a project that builds standalone bridges for approximately \$12-\$15 million, rather than add bike lanes to structures on the Newbury and Vermont structures (on Barbur)
- #5006 ties directly into Red Electric Trail projects in the Active Transportation list