

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING A ) RESOLUTION NO. 16-4751  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR )  
THE PROPOSED SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR ) Introduced by Councilor Craig Dirksen and  
LIGHT RAIL PROJECT ) Councilor Bob Stacey

WHEREAS, the Metro Council identified the Southwest Corridor, located between downtown Portland and Sherwood, as the region’s top priority for consideration for a high capacity transit investment based on the 2009 Regional High Capacity Transit System Plan;

WHEREAS, in December 2011, the Southwest Corridor Plan Steering Committee, including representatives of the cities and counties in the corridor, as well as Metro, TriMet and ODOT, adopted a charter agreeing to use a collaborative and publicly inclusive approach to developing the Southwest Corridor Plan;

WHEREAS, the Southwest Corridor Plan process is intended to lead to the adoption of a locally preferred alternative under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) for a high capacity transit investment in the Southwest Corridor, and consideration of the Southwest Corridor Plan as an amendment to Metro’s Regional Transportation Plan;

WHEREAS, in October 2013, the Metro Council endorsed the *Southwest Corridor Shared Investment Strategy* (Metro Council Resolution No. 13-4468A), directing staff to continue to seek input from the public and to work with project partners to involve stakeholders at key points in the process and on refinement and analysis of high capacity transit alternatives and local connections in the Southwest Corridor;

WHEREAS, in June 2014, the Steering Committee unanimously adopted for further study the *Southwest Corridor Transit Design Options*, a package of the most promising high capacity transit design alignment options and associated roadway, bicycle and pedestrian projects and potential station areas that support the Southwest Corridor Land Use Vision;

WHEREAS, in June 2014, the Metro Council adopted the *Southwest Corridor Transit Design Options*, directed staff to complete a focused refinement period of the *Southwest Corridor Transit Design Options*, and pending Steering Committee direction on the results of the focused refinement analysis and timing of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), directed staff to study the *Southwest Corridor Transit Design Options* under the National Environmental Policy Act in collaboration with the Southwest Corridor Plan project partners and with the involvement of stakeholders and public;

WHEREAS, the Southwest Corridor project partners have committed to collaboratively fund the further study of the options set forth in *Southwest Corridor Transit Design Options* under NEPA, as demonstrated in the actions of their governing bodies;

WHEREAS, in December 2014, the Steering Committee directed staff to implement an 18-month workplan for the focused refinement of the *Southwest Corridor Transit Design Options* using a place-based approach to narrow alignment options and select a preferred transit mode and terminus;

WHEREAS, on June 13, 2016, the Steering Committee endorsed a *Southwest Corridor High Capacity Transit Proposed Range of Alternatives for Environmental Review* that describes the high

capacity transit mode, preferred terminus, and transit alignments, as well as associated roadway, bicycle and pedestrian projects to be considered under NEPA;

WHEREAS, a public scoping process for the forthcoming federal draft environmental impact study was held from September 2, 2016 to October 3, 2016, to solicit public and agency comments on the *Proposed Range of Alternatives for Environmental Review*, prior to commencing work on the DEIS;

WHEREAS, the Steering Committee is expected to make its final decisions on which transit alignments, station locations, associated connectivity projects and other project components should be evaluated in the DEIS in December 2016, with its recommendation of a locally preferred alternative to the Metro Council tentatively scheduled for early 2018;

WHEREAS, the Southwest Corridor Plan project partners seek the input of engaged and informed stakeholder representatives to aid in the selection of the locally preferred alternative, taking into account the anticipated adverse and beneficial impacts of the project alternatives disclosed in the DEIS;

WHEREAS, the Metro Council is supportive of inclusive engagement in its planning process and equitable development as an outcome of high capacity transit investments; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that, the Metro Council, in order to support the Southwest Corridor land use vision and address current and future transportation needs in the corridor, directs staff to work with the Steering Committee to create an advisory committee representative of the Southwest Corridor community whose purpose is to advise the Steering Committee and to assist with the identification of the locally preferred alternative as described in Exhibit A attached to this Resolution.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this 20<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2016.



Tom Hughes, Council President

Approved as to Form:



Alison R. Kean, Metro Attorney

# Exhibit A to Resolution No. 16-4751

## **Southwest Corridor Light Rail Project Community Advisory Committee An Overview**

**Purpose.** Metro is proposing the creation of an advisory committee, the Southwest Corridor Light Rail project Community Advisory Committee (CAC), comprised of community members who represent various stakeholders in the Southwest Corridor. The CAC purpose is to advise the Southwest Corridor Steering Committee in order to aid in the selection of the locally preferred alternative, taking into account the anticipated adverse and beneficial impacts of the project alternatives still under consideration.

**Background.** The Southwest Corridor Light Rail Project is a proposed 12-mile MAX light rail line serving SW Portland, Tigard, Tualatin and the surrounding communities. The proposed project also includes bicycle, pedestrian and roadway projects to improve access to light rail stations. The Light Rail Project is part of a broader Southwest Corridor Plan that identifies an array of investment strategies to help improve safety and quality of life and contribute to the success of local land use and development aspirations in the area.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Metro, TriMet and the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify the significant positive and negative impacts the project could have on the built and natural environment and to determine options to avoid, minimize or mitigate those impacts. The Draft EIS will assess the project alternatives remaining from over three years of analysis refinement and suggest ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate significant adverse impacts. The information disclosed in the Draft EIS, and public and agency comments on the Draft EIS, will inform the Southwest Corridor Steering Committee in its recommendation of an LPA.

**Scope of work.** Southwest Light Rail CAC purpose is to meaningfully involve stakeholder representatives in the selection of the locally preferred alternative. To do so, the CAC must:

- Work collaboratively to provide feedback and recommendations to project staff (from Metro, TriMet, the City of Portland, the City of Tigard, the City of Tualatin, the City of Sherwood, Washington County and ODOT) at key study milestones through the Draft EIS so that stakeholder voices are shared through the process
- Represent stakeholders in the Southwest Corridor
- Bring a broad perspective on the community and social issues in Southwest Corridor neighborhoods, business districts and communities

The CAC chair will attend Steering Committee meetings to share CAC discussion, feedback and advice.

**Membership.** The membership of the Southwest Light Rail CAC will be carefully selected by the Steering Committee to include stakeholders in the corridor, with representatives from residents, property owners, community-based organizations, businesses, educational institutions and advocacy groups. Members should have the ability to work collaboratively with people who don't

share their perspective and bring background knowledge in multiple areas of importance to the corridor.

Members will be identified through an open application process. Official appointments will be made by the Southwest Corridor Steering Committee.

The expected number of Southwest Light Rail CAC members will be between 12 and 18. It will be geographically balanced to include representation from communities along the light rail route. The group's membership will also support Metro's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) program. Specifically, membership will aim to include individuals who represent the following interest and group categories:

- Neighbors (including renters and owners)
- Major employers
- Small businesses
- Property owners
- Educational institutions
- Students / Youth
- Cultural organizations and communities of color
- Community-based organizations
- Environmental interests
- Health-related interests
- Accessibility interests (seniors, people with disabilities)
- Bicycle and pedestrian interests
- Transit-related interests (including transit-dependent individuals)
- General countywide transportation interests

***First-year timeline:*** There will be approximately 10 to 14 CAC meetings between December 2016 and March 2018.

1. Application process for member identification: November 2016
2. Steering Committee membership appointments: December 2016
3. Kickoff meeting: December 2016 / January 2017
4. Final meeting and LPA recommendation to Steering Committee: February / March 2018

## **STAFF REPORT**

### **IN CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 16-4751, FOR THE PURPOSE OF CREATING A COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE PROPOSED SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR LIGHT RAIL PROJECT**

Date: October 20, 2016

Prepared by: Chris Ford x1633

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Evolution of the Southwest Corridor Plan and emergence of the Southwest Corridor Light Rail Project**

The Southwest Corridor Plan is a comprehensive effort focused on supporting community-based development and placemaking that targets, coordinates and leverages public investments to make efficient use of public and private resources. The work has been guided by a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the cities of Beaverton, Durham, King City, Portland, Sherwood, Tigard and Tualatin; Washington County; and TriMet, ODOT and Metro. Steering Committee members agreed to use a collaborative approach to develop the Southwest Corridor Plan and a Shared Implementation Strategy to align local, regional, and state policies and investments in the corridor. In August 2011, the Metro Council adopted Resolution 11-4278 that appointed the Southwest Corridor Steering Committee, and a charter defining how the partners will work together was adopted by the Steering Committee in December 2011.

In October 2013, the Metro Council adopted Resolution No. 13-4468A, endorsing the Southwest Corridor Shared Investment Strategy and directing staff to coordinate and collaborate with project partners on refinement and analysis of high capacity transit (HCT) alternatives and local connections in the Southwest Corridor, along with associated roadway, active transportation and parks/natural resource projects that support the land use vision for the corridor. This resolution also directed staff to work with project partners to involve stakeholders at key points in the process and seek input from the public.

In June 2014, the Metro Council adopted Resolution No. 14-4540, which included direction to staff to study the Southwest Corridor Transit Design Options under the National Environmental Policy Act in collaboration with the Southwest Corridor Plan project partners and with the involvement of stakeholders and public, pending Steering Committee direction on the results of the focused refinement analysis

The Southwest Corridor Light Rail Project has emerged as the preferred high capacity transit investment of the Southwest Corridor Shared Investment Strategy. The project is a proposed 12-mile MAX light rail line serving SW Portland, Tigard, Tualatin and the surrounding communities. The proposed project also includes bicycle, pedestrian and roadway projects to improve access to light rail stations. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and at the direction of the Metro Council, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared by Metro, TriMet and the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) to identify the significant positive and negative impacts the project could have on the built and natural environment and to determine options to avoid, minimize or mitigate those impacts. The Draft EIS will assess the project alternatives remaining from over three years of analysis refinement and suggest ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate significant adverse impacts. The information disclosed in the Draft EIS, and public and agency comments on the Draft EIS, will inform the Southwest Corridor Steering Committee in its recommendation of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).

### **Public involvement in the SW Corridor planning process to date**

Metro Council has directed staff to involve stakeholders at key points in the process and seek input from the public, as noted above. Project partners have also supported a high-level of public engagement in the Southwest Corridor Plan and Shared Investment Strategy. The proposed project entered an early scoping process under NEPA in September 2011, initiating a series of events to gather input on potential transit alternatives between downtown Portland and Sherwood and continuing with public outreach to help define the Shared Investment Strategy as adopted by Metro Council in October 2013.

During the focused refinement period, from December 2014 to May 2016, project staff undertook an 18-month work plan to further refine the HCT design options and complementary roadway, bicycle and pedestrians projects prior to completing a DEIS under NEPA. The focused refinement process was organized around a place-based approach, with public engagement targeted at gathering input and feedback on the primary decision areas of South Portland/Hillsdale, PCC Sylvania, and Tigard/Tualatin, including meetings with relevant neighborhood associations. The various public engagement strategies used during the focused refinement period are described below.

#### ***Tabling events***

Project staff attended a number of tabling events at communities, local colleges and business centers, especially in the summer months to connect with residents at the area's farmers markets and community celebrations.

#### ***Transit rider intercept surveys***

In Spring 2016, Metro public involvement staff worked with the Bicycle Transportation Alliance and TriMet to design a transit rider intercept survey to assess ridership habits, desired safety/access improvements at transit stops in the Southwest Corridor, high-priority destinations in the Southwest Corridor, and feelings about the potential negative impacts of a new light rail line. A total of 134 surveys were completed at four different transit stations in the corridor.

#### ***My Place Dialogues and Community Conversations***

Project staff met with many formal and informal civic, business, resident and youth groups to connect with the public in key places in the corridor. These events focused on geographic, social and cultural issues to elevate the unique local benefits and impacts of the project and also set each community's choices in the context of corridor-wide project performance and decision-making.

#### ***Focused discussions at neighborhood and community meetings***

Project staff met with several neighborhood and community groups to discuss specific aspects of the project in more detail.

#### ***Open houses***

Semi-structured open houses provided opportunities for interested people to drop by to talk and ask questions of staff and decision makers.

#### ***Corridor-wide planning forums***

Three structured planning forums geared toward large numbers of public stakeholders provided opportunities for the public to explore the project decisions in more detail.

#### ***ID Southwest***

ID Southwest is an appointed committee of community leaders who can activate local dialogue that shapes transportation and land use investment in the corridor, and can make the most of public-private partnerships. The committee met three times during the refinement period for project updates and discussions of the Steering Committee decisions.

### ***Online interactive map tool***

In 2015 the project team launched an online map tool where users can click on various points throughout the corridor to learn more and provide feedback. Thousands of people have visited the map and shared input through survey questions and open-ended comment boxes throughout the map. In spring 2015 the map tool provided information on HCT alignment options and gathered feedback on HCT tunnels being considered. In fall 2015 staff updated the map to focus information and survey questions on HCT alignments in the Tigard and Tualatin areas and possible HCT terminus locations. In spring 2016 staff updated the map again to highlight a variety of bicycle, pedestrian and roadway projects that are crucial components of the Southwest Corridor Plan.

### ***Online surveys***

Seven online surveys were completed during the focused refinement period to gather specific feedback to support the Steering Committee decisions.

Technical information was publicly released at least 60 days in advance of Steering Committee recommendations and evaluation and recommendation reports were publicly released at least 30 days in advance, to provide ample time for the public to review the information before providing comments. Project staff summarized the input gathered from the public to inform the Steering Committee prior to each decision.

### **Public involvement during the environmental review phase**

Project staff will adjust the planning process during preparation of the Draft EIS. Most notably, designs for the proposed project will generally not advance during the environmental study, with no design-related decisions anticipated until the LPA selection. There will be less need for place-based public input and feedback during environment review, but a greater volume and complexity of information about the project will be developed. To ensure effective public involvement and input to Steering Committee recommendations, a committed and well-informed group of stakeholders who understand highly technical information and can balance a myriad of trade-offs to identify the best option from the remaining project alternatives is needed.

The creation of a Community Advisory Committee at the start of the Light Rail's EIS process is an opportunity to continue the precedent and direction of involving stakeholders at key points in the planning process and seeking input from the public, while ensuring that this advice remains relevant in the face of increasingly complex and voluminous information.

Staff will continue many of the public engagement strategies employed during the focused refinement period in order to keep stakeholders and the general public informed and involved. One exception is ID Southwest, which was formed, "to make the most of public-private partnerships and help implement early opportunity projects in the corridor" including recommendations to the Steering Committee and the Metro Council regarding funding for specific Shared Investment Strategy projects. Per Exhibit C of Resolution No. 13-4468A, ID Southwest will not serve as a Citizens Advisory Committee, necessitating the creation of this separate body. The initial timeframe for ID Southwest's purpose has passed, with the advancement of the high capacity project into environmental review, and some of its members may serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee. As a result, staff recommends indefinite suspension of the ID Southwest group, thanking its members for their service and encouraging them to apply for Citizens Advisory Committee membership if they are interested and able.



### **Implications of Metro Council Resolution No. 16-4751**

This resolution and many preceding ones have noted that, “the Southwest Corridor Plan process is intended to lead to the adoption of a locally preferred alternative under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) for a high capacity transit investment in the Southwest Corridor, and consideration of the Southwest Corridor Plan as an amendment to Metro’s Regional Transportation Plan.” If the Metro Council votes in favor of this resolution, it would create the proposed community advisory committee to aid the Steering Committee in its selection of an LPA.

Specific next steps include:

1. Metro and partner staff will create and distribute an application for CAC membership, to be released to the general public upon approval of the Steering Committee; and
2. Metro and partner staff will review the applications and recommend individuals to the Steering Committee for appointment, anticipated for December 2016.

### **ANALYSIS/INFORMATION**

1. **Known Opposition** No known opposition exists.
2. **Legal Antecedents** The creation of the Southwest Corridor Light Rail project Community Advisory Committee would satisfy:
  - Aug. 4, 2011, Resolution No. 11-4278: For the Purpose of Creating and Appointing Members of the Southwest Corridor Plan Steering Committee
  - Nov. 17, 2011, Resolution No. 11-4306: For the Purpose of Appointing Additional Members to the Southwest Corridor Plan Steering Committee
  - Oct. 1, 2013, Resolution No. 13-4468A, For The Purpose of Adopting The Southwest Corridor Plan Shared Investment Strategy
  - Jun. 26, 2014, Resolution No. 14-4540: For the purpose of Adopting the Southwest Corridor high capacity transit alignment options, complementary multimodal projects and potential station locations for further study
3. **Anticipated Effects** Council creation of an advisory committee for the Southwest Corridor Light Rail project creates a new way to meaningfully engage community stakeholders in an important upcoming light rail project decision, the selection of the locally preferred alternative. An advisory committee encourages stakeholders with different perspectives to collaborate with each other, staff and the Southwest Corridor Steering Committee. Committee meetings would educate a diverse group of stakeholders about the complexities of the project and the different needs of communities in the corridor, and produce a knowledgeable group of individuals able to share information with others, expanding the reach of the project’s public engagement efforts. The advisory committee would add to the perspectives of the Steering Committee in identifying and selecting a locally preferred alternative, helping to weigh the significant impacts disclosed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement along with the interests and concerns of the diverse population in the corridor, and those who wish better access to the resources within it.

The creation of an advisory group is supportive of inclusive engagement in Metro’s planning process and equitable development as an outcome of high capacity transit investments. An effort to recruit members from cultural organizations and communities of color actively supports Metro’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals.

**Budget Impacts** Costs associated with convening and supporting the CAC are accounted for in the project’s scope of work and budget.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Staff recommends that the Metro Council create an advisory committee comprised of community members who represent stakeholders in the Southwest Corridor to advise the Southwest Corridor Steering Committee in the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative for the Southwest Corridor Light Rail project.