

Meeting minutes

Meeting: **82nd Avenue Steering Committee meeting #8**
 Date/time: Thursday, November 16, 2023 | 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 Place: Hybrid webinar meeting held via Zoom at Portland Community College Southeast
 Campus, Student Commons Room 234, 2305 SE 82nd Ave, Portland, Oregon

Members, Alternates Attending

Ayman Irfan
 Commissioner Julia Brim-Edwards
 Karen Buehrig, alternate
 Kristin Hull, alternate
 Councilor Christine Lewis, Co-chair
 Councilor Duncan Hwang, Co-chair
 Emerald Bogue
 JC Vannatta
 Kaitlyn Dey
 Michael Liu
 Rian Windsheimer
 Zachary Lauritzen

Affiliation

Unite Oregon
 Multnomah County
 Clackamas County
 City of Portland
 Metro
 Metro
 Port of Portland
 TriMet
 Clackamas Service Center
 82nd Avenue Business Alliance
 Oregon Department of Transportation
 Oregon Walks

Members, not in Attendance

Representative Khanh Pham
 Oregon Legislature

Presenters

Elizabeth Mros-O’Hara
 Kate Hawkins
 Paulina Salgado
 Kelly Betteridge
 Jesse Stemmler
 Metro
 Metro
 TriMet
 Metro
 TriMet

Attendees

Chris Ford
 Eve Nilenders
 Holly Querin
 Jacob Loeb
 Jess Zdeb
 Jonathan Plowman
 Julia Reed
 Kathryn Notson
 Malu Wilkinson
 Michael Kiser
 ODOT
 Multnomah County
 Metro
 Metro
 TriMet
 Portland Bureau of Transportation
 Metro
 TriMet

Michelle Rodriguez
Monica Krueger
Nubia Martinez
Peter Dydo

City of Portland, Commissioner Mapps' office
Metro
Metro
WSP

Welcome and Introductions

Co-chair Metro Councilor Duncan Hwang called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. and welcomed the attendees to the meeting by providing an overview of the agenda.

Approval of October 2023 Meeting Minutes

Approval moved by JC Vannatta, seconded by Michael Liu. The minutes were approved with no objections.

Updates from Partners

PBOT (Kristin): PBOT is working on striping improvements, improved crossings, updated street signs to standard and additional engagement for the next wave of investment.

Project Workplan Update and Schedule by Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara (Metro)

Workplan is focused on getting to a locally preferred alternative (LPA). LPA includes mode of transportation, general station locations, route, and general funding plan. Today we are presenting a staff recommendation for the general station locations. There will be a staff recommendation on the northern terminus in January, and then a staff recommendation on a Draft LPA in February. The steering committee will not meet in March. This is to provide time for all the steering committee members to get alignment on the LPA within their agencies prior to them voting to recommend an LPA in April. We could enter Project Development in June and project partners adopt the LPA into their plans. Then the LPA will be adopted by Metro Council and incorporated in the RTP to be eligible for federal funding.

Showed a chart of the topics planned December through Fall 2024.

Discussion

Question: Will committee members be available to meet in person on December 14?

Answer: PBOT and Councilor Lewis are available. Metro will send a Doodle poll.

Northern terminus engagement update by Kate Hawkins (Metro) and Paulina Salgado (TriMet)

Provided an overview of recent engagement around the northern terminus. Summer 2023 engagement on the whole corridor, including the terminus. This fall we are focusing on the four termini and their geographical locations and asking people who live in these areas about how they feel about a terminus. Cully and Parkrose are more residential. Airport and Cascade Station are largely employment and industrial areas, so engagement will be around work access rather than residents. There will be conversations with those that will be affected by splitting the line, particularly for McDaniel High School students.

First focus group was for the Parkrose Transit Center. It was a small, but engaged group. Parkrose High School students (transit users and school board members) and people were excited about a terminus and the opportunity and improvement it would bring in safety and personal security. Sumner neighborhood is disconnected and residents hoped to improve connections.

Cully focus group was at Las Adelitas, well-attended by mostly Spanish speakers and some Somali

speakers. Excited about large bendy buses to get students to school on time with more room. Concern about there not being enough room on the bus for students and they get passed up. Regular transit users. Lots of support for Cully as a terminus, concern about extra traffic and conflict with other modes. Paulina added that the Spanish speakers were very eager to give feedback and it was great to see such a good turnout from a group that is often not well represented. There was a lot of support from Verde for recruiting of focus group participants.

The airport and Cascade Station engagement will focus on engaging businesses, workers, and customers. Conversations are underway with Port staff and business representatives and there will be an update at the December meeting.

Regarding splitting the Line 72, we know that we will impact riders that use the Killingsworth segment of Line 72. We are working with community partners to minimize the impacts to McDaniel High School students and other impacted riders. Thanked PBOT for providing some community connections. Acknowledged the impact to McDaniel HS students and plan to meet with the principal, students, and staff after the teacher's strike ends.

Discussion

Question from Zachary: What did you present in terms of Cully terminus design to initiate the conversation?

Answer from Kate: We didn't provide a lot of design. We provided an aerial photo of Cully triangle with landmarks. Participants marked on the image and provided feedback. We explained that a terminus is more than a bus stop and needs a break room. Design comes in the next phase and a lot of work is to be done before a design can be presented.

Q: Emerald: how do you describe a terminus to community?

A: Paulina: We showed a list of needs and requirements, picture of the FX buses, scale of buses, photos of existing facilities to describe the range of existing facilities.

Zachary requested to see the photos of existing termini.

Photos will be sent out in the December packet.

Q: Duncan: How are you going to use the feedback to help the Steering Committee make a terminus decision.

A: Kate: Feedback will be applied to "community fit and feedback" category on the evaluation criteria matrix.

Staff recommendation on general station locations by Kelly Betteridge (Metro) and Jesse Stemmler (TriMet)

Kelly presented Requirements for CIG (federal) funding to provide a shared understanding. This regional has been very successful in gaining Small Starts grants for projects like Division transit project and A Better Red project. A project needs to be less than \$400m and the max federal contribution is \$150m for a Small Starts grant. So, to maximize federal funds, a project needs to be \$300m.

Small Starts eligibility requirements: "substantial investment in a defined corridor", defined stations, accessible to persons with disabilities, offer shelter from weather, and provide info on schedule and route. Faster service through congested intersections using signal priority, frequent service (defined as 15-minute headways or less), and a consistent brand identity to help riders identify the line. This is a

competitive grant where we will compete with other projects across the nation.

Two steps in the Small Starts process:

1. Plan to request entry into Project Development in Spring 2024
2. Construction grant agreement. About 40 projects are currently in Small Starts Project Development nationwide and hoping to move forward to Construction. Only 6 passed to Construction this year.

Discussion (in italics)

Question by JC: Are all the projects being awarded, were they awarded \$150m?

Answer: No, not all projects go for the maximum amount.

Question from JC: was there any change in criteria when they increased the funding max?

A: No, it was just a funding increase and no change in criteria.

Q from Kristin: Is there any priority to the Small Starts criteria?

A: No.

Q from Christine: What does consistent brand identity mean? Do they mean a name, e.g., MAX, or Orange Line vs. Blue line?

A: FTA did a study and found that people were more likely to use transit if they were very clear about where they were getting on and off and had a clear brand to guide them. The branding can be different by line but must be consistent by corridor. There is a look that is identifiable to buses and stations.

Q from Zachary: What makes a project competitive? Does this committee get to dig into that?

A: This committee will look at it on a high level because of all the factors that regulate transit speed and reliability. After the LPA approval, the design phase will start, an iterative process that will provide more details. Ridership is one key in competitiveness-- speed and reliability are key to increasing ridership. Other factors include environmental benefits (zero emissions vehicles), affordable housing opportunities, proactive zoning for Transit-Oriented Development, as compared to other projects across the country. It's all the good things.

A from JC: All the features we want on this corridor will give us a rating and we want the highest rating we can get.

Q from Christine: In terms of the funding line, describe the cycle of reconsideration funding. Do those that don't get funded just hang out? Do they have to reapply?

A: The process starts with project development, solid design put in for a medium or better rating. Then apply for funding. Some have been in the queue a long time, meeting local requirements, securing funding. Hoping to move on quickly.

A from JC: For example, SW Corridor went into Project Development but then was bumped out when the bond measure didn't pass for the local funds portion.

How long before they take you off? For Small Starts, you have 3 years to meet local requirements and secure 50% of local funding.

Q from Michael Liu: Is there any fear of running out of funding? Is it more about putting the best foot forward or could the funding dry up in 2 years?

A: Funding varies with presidential administration, so the best we can do is do our best. FTA is encouraging us to hurry up. Right now, there is a lot of federal funding.

Q from Kristin: Could you speak to the frequent service headways? Is it 15 minutes for both weekdays and weekends? Does TriMet anticipate any issue with that?

A from JC: No. Service is already frequent and will likely be better with the project.

Jesse presented the Staff recommendation on general station locations. He gave an overview of his presentation and reviewed the purpose and need of the project that the committee adopted that has served as a guide. Jesse emphasized that safety is a core concern by riders. He reminded the committee of the analysis of stations so far and provided a visual timeline of the station refinement process. This part of the process is very high level and the next phase will dive into the details with the stakeholders. 82nd has a lot of stops, every 3 blocks on average, which is closer than best practices and TriMet standard of every 6 blocks. The legacy of these stops is related to the lack of infrastructure. If we can improve access more stops will not be necessary. 75% of riders board at 36% of stops, the highest ridership stops. More stops equal slower speeds, so the stop placement is an important tool for improving travel times and reliability. Stop spacing is a tool used in all BRT projects, although the spacing varies by context.

Q from Zachary: How many blocks is 1/3 of a mile.

A from Elizabeth: We are proposing stops between for 4-6 blocks.

Station investments will include weather protection, seating, lighting, safe pedestrian crossing, consistent branding, signage and wayfinding, raised platforms and near-level boarding, amenities like trash cans, leaning rails, bike racks, etc.

Comment by Christine: please don't put trash cans with et cetera. I hear more about trash cans than I would like, so people want to know.

This transit project provides an opportunity to leverage other investments with our partners. Besides stations, other improvements like ADA ramps, compliant sidewalks, safer pedestrian crossings, improved lighting. Some people will have to walk a little further, but everyone will benefit from faster more reliable service. Paratransit (door-to-door transit for those with mobility impairment) via Lift service will continue to serve those that need it.

Jesse gave a rundown on the areas that needed further refinement between Sandy and Clackamas Town Center. The areas around northern terminus will be addressed and discussed with the terminus discussion. This is because there will be different station needs depending on where the BRT route ends.

We got feedback from the community through surveys, online open house, and QR codes at every stop, focus groups, and area workshops. Large on the community feedback list is better service and reliability, safety, improved streetscape, weather protection, seating. We heard support for both fewer stops and more stops.

Areas of refinement: NE Fremont or Beech; SE Salmon, Taylor Ct, or Yamhill; Se Center or Boise; three stops at Clackamas Town Center for holiday routing flexibility.

Stops that rose to the top: NE Fremont (connectivity), SE Taylor Ct (centrally located), SE Boise (generous sidewalk for amenities), and Clackamas Town Center Mall.

So, now, we will have 31 station locations (61 station platforms). Approximately 96% of residents within a 10-minute walk of an existing stop today will be with a 10-minute walk of a proposed station. The majority of riders will continue to be served by the same stop.

Q from Zachary: What is majority

A from Elizabeth: 75% of people use 36% of stops. We will be serving all of those stops locations with a

new station plus more locations. So, it could be higher, but that is the one thing we know. Many of the stops today have very low ridership. Many stops were added because of lack of access that had insufficient infrastructure.

Comment from Kristin: Aha moment from walking tour. No access between stops required more stops, so I am happy that we are addressing the problem.

Q from Michael Liu: Originally there were 116 stops. Was that the whole line or just the 82nd Avenue portion?

A: Currently there are 107 stops (total both directions) between Sandy and Clackamas. We recommend removing about 23 stops each way.

JC highlighted the importance of sidewalks to improved access that allows for the reduction of stops. TriMet can't remove the stops without the access.

Jesse gave a brief overview of the topic of northern terminus evaluation for next meeting. He shared key takeaways: transit is a lifeline for communities in the corridor, focused station investments improve safety, reliability, and travel time, stop spacing has a direct impact on travel time and reliability, majority of riders will continue to be served at the same locations as today, exact station placement will be explored in the next (project development) phase with more community involvement.

Q from JC: Are you projecting ridership for the future BRT line?

A: Yes, we project up. We projected a 20% ridership increase on Division Transit Project just from improved service. They account for the consolidated stops that were adjacent to remaining stops.

JC pointed out that they projected 20% increase but they are seeing a 40% increase.

Q from Michael about the allocation of funding to sidewalk improvements from this project as opposed to PBOT's project.

A from Kristin: Much of the sidewalk improvements can be funded by the federally-funded project, but there is a cap. So, during project development, where things get done, we'll have to assess how much gets done by the federal-funded transit project and how much the city will need to do outside the project.

Follow up from Michael: if the sidewalk access is in place, could we remove some stops in the short term to improve the line now?

A from Kristin: We haven't talked about that, but we can.

Comment from Elizabeth: the improvements by Portland and ODOT can be leveraged in the transit project. The FTA requirements at the station block level, i.e., ADA accessibility, lighting, etc, can create the ability to spend in more places to get better improvements. We can situate stations where there is a new crossing by Portland, and, in turn, the transit project can focus on ADA accessibility and lighting.

Q from Duncan: Since 82nd is forecasted to grow faster than the region, are we planning for about long-term forecasts and growth?

A: Yes. We are traffic modeling for the future, for future resiliency. Project development will focus on designs that build resilience. TriMet wants design choices that are resilient and meet future needs. Buses are easy to adjust to more need by adding more frequency, adding more buses. Stations are being placed in areas that we expect to be developed into housing and hubs. Even though our stations are on the close side for BRT standards, this corridor has so many destinations that need to be served, and we want to be able to serve all the important places in the community. Division FX has been able to accommodate increase in ridership without eroding travel times because of the larger capacity of the buses and the near-level boarding is quicker.

Q from Zachary about the balance of community feedback for more/less stations? He is hearing a lot of concern about not being able to reach their new stop. Was it one-to-one?

Paulina said that people said in the focus groups that the bus is slower because of all the stops. Elizabeth heard at the workshops (wasn't at all the workshops) that someone wanted to keep all the stops because of concern for disabled folks and the next person she talked to supported removing stops because they regularly miss their transfer because the bus is delayed from stopping so often. This person lives in a group home and his housemates that have trouble walking take paratransit (Lift).

Councilor Lewis appreciated Commissioner Brim-Edwards was wearing two hats this evening and had to leave to go into executive session for the Portland teacher contract negotiations.

Q from Zachary: What is near-level boarding? And why not just do level boarding?

A: The reason we don't do level boarding is we want to still serve those stops with our standard 40-foot buses. There's a conflict with the lugnuts and there is a sweet spot at 9 inches that has the right slope for ramp deployment.

Q from Zachary: Can money be used on private property to improve the "last mile," for instance at Clackamas Town Center, for safely navigating through the parking lot?

A: sometimes yes, we have agreements or acquisitions with private property owners.

Follow up from Councilor Lewis: The garage or across from the theater? [garbled]

We aren't making any changes to the stops at Clackamas Town Center.

Q from Zachary: What if we make a mistake? The simple bus stop is easy to move, but the beautiful new station is more permanent. Things change and how flexible are these things?

A: yes, over time, things change. There is opportunity to make improvements and adjust to new conditions.

Q from Zachary: different contributing factors to reliability, and what improvements create the most reliability.

A: TCRP (Transit Cooperative Research Fund) has done extensive research across the country looking at how tools contribute to better reliable service. Every corridor is different so there is some nuance. We can share that. It'll give you an indication, but I can tell you that stop balancing and transit signal priority are the top two tools consistently across the study. It's really hard to know what changes are making the most difference because every intersection is different. Also, we haven't gotten into that kind of detail yet. There is no average percentage because of the variation.

JC: Did you see the results of turning off the TSP on Division? We saw significant time savings was quite remarkable.

ACTION: Committee members requested a link to the Transit Signal Priority study (TriMet).

Rian commented that there is a balance between bus reliability and vehicle traffic.

Kristin pointed out that each stop has an associated cost, so fewer stops means less capital investment.

Q from Michael: How often are lines rebalanced? Do corridors ever get rebalanced or do we wait until we need a big project?

A: We are always analyzing operations and reliability, which stops we need and which stops we don't need. It is ongoing work.

Steering committee feedback/discussion/temperature taking (Steering Committee)

Councilor Lewis introduced the temperature check and rephrased it as a right direction/wrong direction check-in.

Temp check: all greens, no yellows, no reds.

Discussion

JC appreciated all the community outreach.

Karen appreciated the extra look at the Clackamas Town Center and looks forward to the deeper dive on that area.

Zachary: The coalition hears a lot about activating space within a car-centric corridor. Stations can be more than a place to catch the bus. How do we make it more than a station, a vibrant, activated space. How can we promote more activated space around transit on the corridor?

Councilor Lewis is visualizing all aspects of the stations and thinks the committee should revisit those in the future.

Duncan is a green on transit, but the impacts need to be considered; great transit can displace community members by increasing land values. Planning needs to take a holistic approach and looks forward to hearing about the equitable development strategy to prevent displacement of the community. Co-benefits of transit are many, including workforce development, DBE contracting, affordable housing and economic development that will promote a vibrant and safe corridor. Really happy with the way the transit piece is coming together but just pointing out that is only a piece of the puzzle.

JC seconded Duncans thoughts in making the conversation about a wider influence in the community, bringing partners together, like when the yellow line opened Prosper Portland gave out short term grants for storefront improvements. So how do we get at those conversations, for example, affordable housing?

Councilor Lewis observed that today's topic is station location for the transit project and the conversation has veered way off topic.

Rian observed that the conversation today is about station locations, but the questions are very insightful. It's not a lot today but when it turns into an 18-story affordable housing, mixed whatever something, how do you make sure it's adaptable? And how do you leverage all those components into the planning, then into the code, and into the frontage improvements, and other things? Appreciates the thoughts because when we talk about a road it's not just about safe crossing and such. It's a lot more than that and part of a broader picture. It sounds like we are trying to envision a broader plan and I think that is really important. We're not going to be able to solve all those problems at this table, but I'm glad we're talking about them and we're considering all that.

Kristin asked TriMet to talk about the grant that they just received. \$680,000 was awarded for Areas of Persistent Poverty.

Public Comment

None

Next Steps/Adjourn by Councilors Hwang and Lewis (Metro)

There will be a Doodle poll for the December meeting and the topics will be the norther terminus evaluation and project routing analysis.

Meeting adjourned at 5:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanja Olson, 82nd Avenue Steering Committee Recorder

Attachments to the Public Record, 82nd Avenue Steering Committee meeting, November 18, 2023

Item	DOCUMENT TYPE	DOCUMENT DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT No.
1	Agenda	11/09/2023	11/16/2023 82 nd Avenue Steering Committee Meeting Agenda	1116202382ASC-01
2	Document	11/08/2023	82nd Avenue Transit Project Steering Committee October 2023 Draft Minutes	1116202382ASC-02
3	Document	11/09/2023	82nd Avenue Transit Project Steering Committee Schedule	1116202382ASC-03
4	Document	11/07/2023	82nd Avenue Transit Project LPA in progress Updated DRAFT	1116202382ASC-04
5	Document	08/30/2022	Consensus decisions for meeting protocols	1116202382ASC-05