



Land Use & Transportation Planning Program
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Multnomah County Bicycle and Pedestrian Citizen Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

Board Room, Multnomah Building, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Laura Becker (A)
Jim Couch
Michael Dehner
Ryan Farncomb
Art Graves
Andrew Holtz
Greg Olson
Tyson Poskochil
Rory Renfro
John Russell (A)
Susan Watt

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Martha Berndt
Carolyn Briggs
Talia Jacobson
Chad Tucker

STAFF: Kate McQuillan (Transportation Planner), Jon Henrichsen (Bridges Manager), Jessica Berry (Transportation Planner), Xao Xoing (AmeriCorps Safe Routes to School Coordinator), JD Deschamps (Dep't of County Assets)

GUESTS: Rithy Khut, Joel Huffman, Paul Smith (Day CPM Services), Matt Sedor (SRG), Bjorn Clouten (SRG), Steve Simpson (SRG), Scott Mooney (SRG), Jerry Hein (Hoffman Construction), and Tim Clemen (PLACE)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm. There was a quorum of members present.

2. Approve February 2016 Meeting Minutes

There were no corrections for the February 2016 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Ryan Farncomb moved to approve the February 2016 meeting minutes. Tyson Poskochil seconded the motion.

APPROVAL: February 2016 meeting minutes were approved. Two members abstained (Jim Couch and Greg Olson).

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Staff Report

Kate provided a brief update on Committee membership. Currently there is one vacancy on the Committee. She is gearing up for outreach and recruitment later this spring with the desire to appoint a new member by July 1.

5. Chair Report

Jim Couch, Vice Chair, facilitated the evening's meeting. There was no Chair Report.

6. Draft Multnomah County Transportation System Plan (TSP)

Jessica Berry, Transportation Planner for Multnomah County, presented the final draft of the Multnomah County Transportation System Plan (TSP), focused on the County's rural unincorporated areas. The Citizen Advisory Committee for the project approved all the policies within the draft TSP at their previous meeting in March.

To date, the BPCAC has provided a lot of input to staff on the draft transportation policies, the bicycle map, and the project list. In this final draft that is going to the Planning Commission Hearing later this spring, Committee members will find new sections describing tools and innovative treatments the County could implement to achieve its transportation goals. The Existing Conditions section is a data-heavy but interesting read for advocates who want to learn more about the County's rural communities and roads.

Jessica announced two upcoming workshops in the communities to share the draft plan before heading to Planning Commission hearings. The hearings will be held on April 5th at Skyline Elementary School and April 7th at the County's East Building near downtown Gresham, both from 6 to 8pm.

One Committee member asked how can citizens submit comments on the draft plan. Staff will be at each of the above workshops to record general comments shared. Although following the public workshops, the TSP and the Comp Plan will have a formal public comment period which will include easy online forms. Online form submissions and other written comment during this period will be included in the public record presented to the Planning Commission.

7. New Central Courthouse Briefing

JD Champs, Senior Project Manager in the County's Facilities Department, introduced his large team of construction and design consultants working on the new Multnomah County Central Courthouse project. Currently, the project team has early schematic designs to share with the

Committee. The project has a \$300 million budget, split 50/50 between the County and the state of Oregon. Construction is expected to occur in 2019 with the building opening in 2020.

As BPCAC members recall from previous meetings, the downtown site selected for the new Central Courthouse is the current half-vacant parcel directly adjacent to the west end of the Hawthorne Bridge, with the primary grand entry at SW 1st and Madison Streets. The building is proposed to be oriented to the plaza across SW Madison Street, with a light and airy design that opens up to downtown Portland. The site is unique in that every street that borders the property serves very different transportation purposes. SW Madison is a major eastbound bike and transit thoroughfare connecting to the Hawthorne Bridge, whereas SW Naito to the east has narrow sidewalks and primarily prioritizes motor vehicle movement travelling through downtown.

The proposed new Central Courthouse will be a very different experience than Multnomah County's current downtown courthouse with its entrance located on SW 4th Avenue between Main and Salmon. The new building will greatly improve the experience for juror's queueing into the building and passing through security, comfortably accommodating up to 120 jurors. Design renderings of the buildings are accessible on the project's website.

The project team had two specific transportation-related topics they sought feedback on from the BPCAC: (1) proposed pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on SW Madison connecting to the Hawthorne Bridge, and (2) pedestrian access from Naito Parkway to the elevated Hawthorne Bridge sidewalk.

The current proposal for SW Madison adjacent to the site is to have an 8-ft wide pedestrian way, a 4-ft furnishing zone with street trees and landscaping, and a 6-ft raised bicycle lane plus 6-inch curb to the adjacent travel lane. Per requests from the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) and TriMet, the travel lanes on SW Madison St will likely be 14-ft (and cannot be narrowed). The elevated bike lane will gradually lower to street level approaching the Hawthorne Bridge. Similarly, the sidewalk and furnishing zone will taper by approximately 1.5-ft to meet the existing geometry of the elevated bridge ramp.

Discussion from the BPCAC:

- Some members were concerned about a raised 6-ft wide bicycle lane with a curb not being adequate enough to accommodate the high volume of eastbound cyclists who may wish to pass slower cyclists travelling uphill. Some cyclists will likely prefer to ride in the adjacent travel lane.
- A member of the Committee suggested a bicycle lane taper, starting with a wider 8-ft bicycle lane to the west of the block. The bicycle lane would taper as enters the bridge ramp, encouraging earlier passing and merging for cyclists travelling at different speeds.
- Could the curb be a 4-inch rounded mountable curb instead? PBOT has requested a 6-inch curb versus a shorter mountable curb. PBOT also suggested having a 9-foot wide

buffered bicycle lane at street level but project staff cannot accommodate that width in the cross-section.

- Many members expressed the desire to better delineate the raised bicycle lane from the sidewalk using some design suggestions in the landscaping/furniture zone. There is some concern that particularly in high-pedestrian traffic times that pedestrians would meander through the trees in the furniture zone and potentially into the bicycle lane. One member suggested either cable wire barriers (like those used at the new OMSI station for the Max Orange Line) or intermittent planters. Project staff liked design ideas with small foot prints to maintain as much space as possible for open flow and movement. Committee members appreciate the desire for open flow but suggest that safety concerns between pedestrians and cyclists be the priority.
- Any potential design solutions in the furniture zone to keep pedestrian and bicycle traffic separate will need to accommodate pedestrians and sidewalk users who are sight impaired. Project staff discussed options for variations in the pavement grooves to indicate change in path, and potentially the use of truncated domes to delineate a transition zone between the sidewalk and the bicycle lane.
- One member brought up the possibility that street trees may obscure sightlines of cyclists moving quickly through green traffic lights, reducing reaction time if a pedestrian has wandered into the bicycle lane.
- What about potential conflicts with transit users at the popular transit stops at SW 1st and Madison? Since the opening of the Tilikum Crossing, more than half of the transit traffic at that stop has shifted, decreasing the amount of buses stopping and transit users waiting at the intersection.

The project team wanted feedback on whether or not the stairwell along SW Naito Parkway connected to the SW Madison Street on the Hawthorne Bridge ramp would be used; and if so, what should the project team consider with the proposed replacement stairs. Current renderings for the project show an enhanced stairwell along the east-facing side of the Courthouse adjacent to SW Naito Parkway sidewalk.

- Committee members acknowledge the use of the current stairwell is likely very low most likely due to how pedestrian-unfriendly SW Naito Parkway is and the lack of safe crossing connecting to Waterfront Park.
- Committee members agree the new Courthouse plus the new plaza that will be constructed across the street to the north will greatly increase the number of pedestrians travelling in the area and thus recommend building as big and as accommodating of a staircase as possible. This would include retaining as much of the "apron" (additional sidewalk space) on the bridge ramp where the current staircase meets the ramp sidewalk.
- Committee members also encouraged project staff to look into any additional improvements that can be made to the frontage on SW Naito Parkway, including improving pedestrian conditions crossing underneath the Hawthorne Bridge ramp and providing a safe crossing to access Waterfront Park.

Project staff greatly appreciated the Committee's input. The team would like to come back in 4-5 months with an update on the design renderings and after they have received additional input from PBOT on street design standards. The team would also like to bring back the traffic control plans and preliminary construction plans to the Committee at a future meeting.

8. Other Business

Jon Henrichsen, Manager of the County's Bridges team, presented a proposed improvement to the west end of the Hawthorne Bridge since receiving public comment that the eastbound on-ramp from SW Naito Parkway feels unsafe for some bicyclists travelling eastbound along SW Madison St. County staff presented a draft proposal to add a "Caution Bikes" warning to drivers attempting to merge from the on-ramp. Staff also proposed adding "sharks teeth" yield pavement markings for pedestrians walking up the ramp, and also straightening out the bicycle lane that crosses in front of the vehicle on-ramp.

Committee members generally liked the idea of straightening out the bicycle lane but have some follow-up questions about if it would actually help to increase the number of drivers who yield safely. Some Committee members expressed concern that additional pavement markings to yield will be ignored. The Committee asked if staff could bring back engineering plans for further discussion when they become available. Staff added that engineering plans would also have to be run by a traffic engineer to better understand impacts to the whole transportation system.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

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Meeting minutes written and submitted by:

Kate McQuillan, Transportation Planner and BPCAC Staff Liaison

The next BPCAC meeting is scheduled for: Wednesday, April 13, 2016 from 6:30-8:30pm, at the Multnomah Building.