

PDC

PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

DATE: March 11, 2009

TO: Board of Commissioners

FROM: Bruce A. Warner, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Report Number 09-32
Briefing on Portland Milwaukie Light Rail Transit – Willamette Bridge Selection Process

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED

None – information only.

SUMMARY

In July 2008, the Metro Council adopted a new Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Portland-Milwaukie light rail transit (LRT). As part of the LPA process, the Willamette River Bridge Advisory Committee (WRBAC) has evaluated alternatives for a transit bridge crossing the Willamette River from South Waterfront, in the North Macadam Urban Renewal Area (URA), to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), in the Central Eastside URA. At the Portland Development Commission (PDC) Board of Commissioners meeting, TriMet staff will provide a briefing on this Willamette River Transit Bridge selection process.

BACKGROUND

Note: Prior Board Reports (07-73, 08-35, 08-97) have provided additional background information.

The focus of this briefing is the Willamette River Transit Bridge selection process. The following provides background on the past year of effort focused on the LRT project.

In July 2008, the Metro Council adopted a new LPA for the Portland-Milwaukie LRT. Currently, Metro and TriMet are preparing the draft Final Environmental Impact Statement, which is due fall 2009, and they are about to initiate 30% preliminary engineering design. Construction is currently expected to start in 2011, with completion of the light rail line, stations, and bridge in 2015.

The LPA adopted in July 2008 includes a LRT terminus, alignments, stations, park and ride lots, and bus and streetcar elements as follows:

- Terminus
 - Park Avenue terminus
 - Minimum Operating Segment (MOS) at Lake Road if project revenues and project estimates cannot be balanced

- Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Alternative Alignments, including:
 - Connecting to the southern end of the new LRT mall alignment in downtown Portland with a SW Lincoln Street alignment
 - Refined SW Porter Street to SE Sherman Street Willamette River Crossing
 - Tillamook Branch Alignment south of Tacoma
- LRT Stations - Stations would include stops and shelters at: SW Lincoln Street, South Waterfront (SW Porter Street), SE Sherman Street/OMSI, SE Gideon Street, SE Lafayette/Rhine, SE Holgate Boulevard, SE Bybee Boulevard, SE Tacoma Street, Milwaukie downtown (at SE Washington Street) and SE Park Avenue. If the MOS at Lake is constructed first, downtown Milwaukie stations could be located at SE Monroe Street and at SE Lake Road.
- LRT Park and Ride Lots - Park and Ride lots with the noted number of parking spaces would be located at the following stations: Tacoma (1,000) and Park (1,000). If the MOS at Lake is constructed, it would include a 275 space park and ride at SE Lake Road at SE Washington Street, and an increase at Tacoma Park and Ride to 1,200 spaces.
- Bus Improvements - The Portland-Milwaukie LRT Project LPA includes: bus guideway over the Willamette River as well as bus on and off ramps for the South Waterfront and Central Eastside areas; new roads and traffic signal and intersection improvements for bus access to the new Willamette River Transit bridge.
- Ruby Junction Maintenance Facility - The Portland-Milwaukie LRT Project LPA includes an expansion of the existing Ruby Junction Operations and Maintenance Facility to accommodate additional light rail vehicles associated with the operations of the Portland-Milwaukie LRT Project.
- Future Streetcar Improvements - The Portland Streetcar, a distinct transit mode from LRT, could share some of the improvements made for LRT including the new Willamette River crossing, with LRT tracks also used by streetcars. On and off tracks for the streetcar to connect to the bridge would also be included in this project although additional track connections would need to be made by a separate streetcar project plan and funding effort.
- Next Steps - The LPA included local approval to proceed with the following next steps:
 - Submit Federal Transportation Administration New Starts and Preliminary Engineering applications.
 - Initiate a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).
 - Identify and reach agreement on project elements that can be reduced, deferred or eliminated to reduce project costs by the time the FEIS is published.
 - Undertake actions to finalize the capital and operating financial plan for the project by the time the FEIS is published.
 - Resolution of project issues identified during and after publication of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS).

City of Portland Bureau Staff Recommendation

City Staff, in conjunction with various City of Portland bureaus, supported the implementation of the Portland-Milwaukie LRT Project to improve transportation access and mobility in the McLoughlin Corridor and to implement the region's 2040 growth management strategies.

The City of Portland staff recommendation in support of the Metro alignment included the following elements:

- Willamette River Crossing – Adopt the findings and recommendations of the Willamette River Crossing Partnership for the modified Porter-Sherman alignment.
- North Milwaukie Alignment – Adopt the Tillamook Branch alignment to minimize impacts to Milwaukie's northern industrial area. Up to 1,200 (200 additional) spaces could be accommodated at the Tacoma station, provided a traffic impact analysis and site analysis demonstrate that there is no significant impact to the surrounding transportation system and to Johnson Creek habitat.
- Southern Terminus at Park Avenue – Extending the LRT line to Park Avenue provides for a better transit project for meeting the regional mobility goals and creating a thriving Milwaukie Town Center, but requires a significant increase in local funding requirements. If a specific funding strategy with commitments from each of the local jurisdictions is not in place by December 31, 2008 (final funding plan summer 2009), then the terminus of the project should be reduced to Lake Road in downtown Milwaukie as part of a first development phase.
- Stations – In downtown Portland, transit is needed to maximize development density to achieve the regional goals of 2040 for the region's growth management goals and the goals of the Central City Plan. Meeting transit commuter mode splits goals of 60% for Downtown Portland and 40% for South Waterfront rely on efficient light rail system for regional access. The City of Portland will partner with TriMet and Metro to evaluate optimal station spacing in the South Auditorium and River Place area to meeting regional access needs for efficient transit operation, and land use and development access needs for these two areas while minimizing capital costs,. Specifically, considerations will include a single station serving River Place and South Auditorium, reducing the size of the light rail structure, and stations at River Place and Lincoln to address capital costs and development trade-offs.

North Macadam and Central Eastside URAs

All alignments travel through the North Macadam and Central Eastside URAs. Previous briefings have discussed in detail the issues and areas of concern within each. These can be summarized as follows:

- North Macadam:
 - LRT alignment and impacts on adjacent properties
 - Changes to local street grid and required amendment to the South Waterfront Street Plan
 - Modifications to the Greenway Development Plan will be required based on LRT and Greenway interface

- Recommended alignment adjacent to western edge of RiverPlace Parcel 3
 - All alignments bisect the Harbor-Naito area
 - The Lincoln and Harbor Drive stations will be evaluated to determine if combining these stations can serve the needs of the area.
- Central Eastside:
- OMSI Master Plan coordination
 - Coordination with Oregon Pacific Railroad and Union Pacific rail lines.
 - Coordination / connection with eastside Streetcar alignment
 - Impacts to Greenway based on the location, design, and structural requirements of a LRT bridge.
 - Water Avenue relocation
 - River Navigational Clearance

Costs and Funding

Metro’s current preliminary funding plan shows the project cost for the existing 2003 LPA at \$1,285.7 M in year of expenditure dollars (2011-2015). The recommended alignment with a Porter-Sherman river crossing is projected to be higher than the LPA by \$24.4 – \$34.3 M. At the southern terminus, alternative alignments along the Tillamook branch and extensions from the 2003 LPA terminus (at Lake) to a terminus at Park add additional cost.

A funding plan will be developed by Metro in consultation with its partner agencies. At the completion of the Preliminary Engineering/Final Environmental Impact Statement in summer 2009, a final funding plan will be in completed.

The project costs, and anticipated funding sources, are summarized in the following chart. In this chart, the ‘low’ project cost estimate assumes the 2003 LPA river crossing and a concrete segmental bridge type; the ‘high’ project cost estimate assumes the Refined River Crossing Alignment at Porter-Sherman and a cable-stayed bridge.

	2003 LPA terminus at Lake		2003 LPA terminus extension to Park		2003 LPA terminus extension to Park with Tillamook branch alignment	
	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Cost (in Millions)	\$1,177.1	\$1,285.7	\$1,345.8	\$1,454.4	\$1,311.1	\$1,419.7
Revenue Sources						
Section 5309 New Start Funds	\$706.3	\$750.0	\$750.0	\$750.0	\$750.0	\$750.0

State Lottery Bond Proceeds	\$250.0	\$250.0	\$250.0	\$250.0	\$250.0	\$250.0
Local Funds for Construction Period Finance Costs	\$100.0	\$100.0	\$100.0	\$100.0	\$100.0	\$100.0
Other Local and Regional Funds	\$120.8	\$185.7	\$245.8	\$354.4	\$211.1	\$319.7

- Other Local and Regional Funds – As indicated in the chart above, the local and regional funds required vary depending on the alignment. These funding sources include: Metro, TriMet, Clackamas County, City of Milwaukie, and the City of Portland. In addition, Metro and TriMet are proposing that property owners along the alignment, and Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU, contribute money to the project as part of the local funding. The City of Portland contribution is expected to be in the \$30 - \$50M range, with no specific funding source identified. To date, PDC has contributed \$50,000 from the North Macadam URA to assist with the SDEIS funding. No capital dollars are currently budgeted in North Macadam or Central Eastside URAs.

Consistency with URA plans

Light rail service through the Central Eastside and North Macadam URAs is consistent with the goals of each of the URA plans. The recommended alternative alignments to the LPA are supportive of redevelopment planning underway in both URAs and is expected to contribute to cooperation/collaboration with two major stakeholders in each of the two districts: OMSI and OHSU.

Public Benefit

The Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Corridor is part of a regional light rail system. The southeast corridor connecting Portland Central City with southeast Portland and Milwaukie and Clackamas County is a key corridor not served by light rail transit.

Light rail combined with the Portland Streetcar Loop will provide important transportation capacity and circulation for future economic growth. The proposed bridge would also be used by streetcar to complete the Central City Streetcar Loop.

OMSI believes that light rail service is critical to its long term operations. Light rail service is supportive of redevelopment efforts in the Central Eastside and will increase capacity on regional connectors within the Central Eastside URA to accommodate increased visitors to OMSI and area employers.

The proposed LRT line within the CES URA will provide an opportunity for increased job densities and increased employment opportunities at the station in an area with transportation constraints.

This project will leverage significant federal funds (approximately \$750M) that would not otherwise come into the Portland economy. The construction is forecast to generate between the annual equivalent of 10,800 to 13,680 jobs and generate between \$425 million and \$540 million in personal income.

Light rail service to the South Waterfront District of North Macadam is considered essential to provide transportation system capacity adequate to support continued development in the district in accordance with the South Waterfront Plan, based on existing transportation studies. This conclusion is expected to be reinforced in the North Macadam URA Transportation System Development Study currently underway.

In 2030, transit travel times between Milwaukie and the South Waterfront without light rail is forecast to be 39 minutes and with light rail this trip would take 16 minutes. Transit travel time between the OHSU Schnitzer Campus and other important research institutions including OMSI, Portland State University, and OHSU Marquam would be less than 5 minutes.

OHSU now has 1,000 new jobs located in the South Waterfront as of fall 2006, and is planning 5,000 more jobs on its South Waterfront properties within the next ten years. Light rail service in the South Waterfront will connect these jobs with transit service to the metropolitan area. The South Waterfront Plan adopted a mode split goal for 30% of all trips on alternative modes and for 40% of commuter trips on alternative modes. Light rail is important to meeting these minimum targets.

Impacts to PDC staff

PDC staff to the North Macadam and Central Eastside URAs will continue to support Portland Bureau of Transportation, Metro, and TriMet by providing input on the redevelopment opportunities and constraints as the environmental evaluation proceeds. Staff time in support of this project is not included in the PDC budget as a specific project activity but is included in current workplans.

PDC staff represent PDC interests on a variety of committees related to this project. These include the Willamette River Partnership Committee, the City of Portland Portland-Milwaukie LRT Technical Advisory Committee, the Metro led Portland-Milwaukie LRT Technical Advisory Committee, and the Metro led South Corridor Phase II Project Management Group.

ATTACHMENT:

- A. Portland Milwaukie LRT Alignment



* Lake Road Minimum Operable Segment (MOS):
 A Lake Road MOS terminus would include a 275 space park and ride at Lake Road, and a 1250 space park and ride at Tacoma.
 ** The Lincoln and Harbor Stations will be consolidated into a single station. The New Starts application will include the Lincoln Station.