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The Southwest Portland Post

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Katz committee considers four alternative routes for Metro light rail bridge

By Lee Perlman
 The Southwest Portland Post

A broad-based committee chaired by former Portland mayor Vera Katz is considering (or re-considering) where a bridge carrying a future light rail line from downtown to Milwaukie should be located.

The decision on this issue was made three years ago, and it was to have the line proceed from Portland State University on Southwest Lincoln Street, going by River Place, and touching the east side near Southeast Caruthers Street and the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

This was designated the "locally preferred alternative." However, since then planners and politicians have questioned whether it would be worthwhile to bring the line on the west side further south, allowing it to serve Oregon Health and Sciences University's proposed South Waterfront campus, and bringing it closer to their aerial tram and public health facility.

As a result, Metro is now studying four new routes involving two possible destinations on each side of the river – Southwest Meade and Porter streets on the west side, and Southeast Caruthers and Sherman streets on the east.

Each of the new routes would add to the cost of the project, at rates ranging from \$24 million for Meade-Sherman to \$34 million for Porter-Sherman. However, each would add substantially to the number of people riding the train, including what Metro calls System Change – people taking mass transit, of any sort, who

do not do so now. This would rise from 9,000 new trips with the LPA to 10,500 with the Porter-Caruthers route, according to Metro's Bridget Wieghart.

It would also add to the length of the new line, and to the time it would take for the train to cover it. This could affect Portland's proposed funding request from the Federal Transit Administration. Metro does not now have a plan to finance the project, planner Richard Brandman said, but federal funds will certainly be necessary to meet its \$1.2 billion cost.

For the FTA, "cost-effectiveness" (speed and cost) are the most important considerations, more so than increased ridership and incentives to high-density development, consultant David Knowles said. "I hope the decisions we make around this table (with regard to the bridge) won't affect our cost-effectiveness rating, but we don't know that for sure," Brandman said.

The bridge will also carry a streetcar link that would complete a loop around the Central City with the proposed completion of an extension to the near-in east side. A new component over what was originally proposed as a rail bridge would be bus lanes, which would carry the #9 Powell, #17 Holgate and #19 Woodstock lines.

With a crossing unimpeded by traffic, the buses would save up to seven minutes in travel time, and the change would add another 1,000 new riders to the system, Wieghart and Metro's Tony Mendoza said. The lanes would add a "slight" increase

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This picture of the Multnomah business district (from a rooftop at Southwest 35th and Capitol Highway) was taken circa August 1958. (Photo courtesy of Erwin Kallese)

Historical association plans for Multnomah's 100th birthday

By Mark Ellis
 The Southwest Portland Post

For right around 100 years, as near as Patti Waitman-Ingebretsen and her cohorts on the board of the Multnomah Historical Association can tell, Multnomah Village has been the hub of the Southwest Portland community.

"We were just part of the county before the 1954 incorporation into the City of Portland," remembers Patti, "but we had the doctor's office, the bank, the post office, the grocery store." Now president of the society, she grew up in the area, attended Wilson High School, and raised a family here.

For a good number of those 100 years Multnomah Days has been the signature Southwest community celebration. Now, in preparation for the centennial installment of that popular cultural event, Patti and the association are asking a big "What if?" question.

They have proposed and are implementing a plan to take Multnomah Days community-wide, with each of the Southwest neighborhoods getting involved and joining in the observance.

Patti has made part of her mission visiting the various neighborhood association meetings to familiarize folks with her plan, which involves a number of options for various neighborhoods to highlight their own unique history. "We're calling it 'A Grand Cel-

ebration for our Community,'" says Patti, who mentions that reaction to her organizational trial balloon was overwhelmingly positive. Perusal of a projected calendar reveals that several events over and above the usual street fair and parade have already been docketed.

An August 8th Wine Reception will kick off a full week of activities which culminate the following Saturday in what is being called the Grand Centennial Parade for 2008. Highlights include a ceremony to dedicate the bronze marker which has been procured through a grant and approved for placement on the Multnomah viaduct, and a bridge lighting through the extent of the celebration. Two farmer's markets will occur during the week, Hillsdale's and Multnomah's, and an All-Class reunion is slated for Friday August 15th at the Multnomah Center. Patti makes clear that there are still plenty of open nights and opportunities for neighborhoods from Crestwood to Bridlemile to participate.

Plans for historical walking tours, production of a 2009 then-and-now calendar, and historical DVD are also on the drawing board, as is a survey of pre-1945 SW homes. Patti also confirms that a membership drive will be an adjunct to the celebration.

She is open to ideas, and wants to hear from anyone interested in volunteering or otherwise helping with plan-

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Eli Head takes a coffee break with Angela Schroeder while Kristy Viaches and baby Salix wait for a friend at Lair Hill Bistro. Feature story on Page 5. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

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