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TriMet proposed service cuts include lines 39 Lewis & Clark, 43 Taylors Ferry

By Lee Perlman
 The Southwest Portland Post

In our lean times, TriMet is tightening its belt. Bus riders and community advocates protest that the exercise is sacrificing the wrong things, or is just plain misguided.

As TriMet's Jon Joseph and Dan Marchand told the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association (HNA) last month, the agency is facing a double whammy: not only is fare box revenue decreasing, but so is the payroll tax that accounts for 55 percent of its budget, and is affected by a regional reduction in business income. TriMet is facing a \$13.5 million shortfall, Joseph said, and has already instituted a hiring freeze.

Asked to examine their services in January, the transit agency has proposed to eliminate several "low-performing" lines and reduce service on a number of others.

Here in Southwest, there will be service reductions on either weekdays or weekends on Line #1 Vermont, #39 Lewis and Clark, #43 Taylors Ferry, #51

Vista, and #63 Washington Park. There will also be a reduction in frequency of MAX light rail service, and perhaps some modification of the Fareless Square free ride system offered for the Downtown, Old Town and Lloyd Center areas.

In addition to low ridership, Marchand said, TriMet wanted to avoid eliminating service essential to a large number of commuters, essential to "transit-dependent" people who don't own cars, or lines where there is no other transit service available to the people who use them. The agency recently raised its fares and considered doing so again, "but we realize this would be a hardship for our most vulnerable customers," he said.

The TriMet board will consider the reductions at three hearings in April: April 6 at Wilson High School, April 7 at the Portland Building at 1120 S.W. Fifth Ave., and April 8 in Clackamas County. All will be from 6 to 8 p.m. Any changes approved will take effect on September 20.

Several Hillsdale residents protested the elimination of Line #55 Hamilton



(Photo courtesy of pdxpipeline.com)

(Editor's Note: TriMet has since revised its list of cutbacks with Line #55 Hamilton retaining service hourly). Rick Seifert noted that it serves Lincoln High School, and that without it, "Kids from Bridlemile will have to walk all the way to Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway, on streets with no sidewalks," to find alternative transportation.

Others, such as Hillsdale Business and Professional Association chair Mike Roach, said it would exacerbate an existing problem of people using

Hillsdale Town Center as a Park-and-Ride lot while they board buses for downtown. "They drive to Hillsdale, park, hope no one notices, and hop on a (Bus) #44 or #45," he said. Reiterating Seifert's point he said, "It's one thing to talk about 'alternative routes' on the east side, another to do it here where there's no safe place to walk."

HNA chair Don Baack said he thought Tri-Met had contributed to the problem because they had "screwed up the

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Hillsdale Terrace to apply for HOPE VI redevelopment funds

By Allison Rupp
 The Southwest Portland Post

After a March 17 meeting of its board of directors, the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) has decided to pursue a complete redevelopment of Hillsdale Terrace, an ailing low-income apartment complex in Southwest Portland.

The 63-unit building has become HAP's most expensive to run, with utility costs for each unit double that of

other properties and maintenance costs 75 percent greater.

Constructed in 1968, the building at 6775 SW 26th Ave. suffers from inadequate insulation because of its concrete masonry and a living atmosphere that HAP determined "harsh" and "institutional" in its February report on site conditions.

Furthermore, poor soil conditions have led to dangerous erosion, and the current layout of the eight buildings allows few open, recreational spaces for individual or community use.

"It's a very challenging property from a topographical perspective," said Katie Such, the deputy executive director at HAP.

The board has considered a variety of options to improve the condition of Hillsdale Terrace since 2000, including selling the site and extensive improvements on the existing structure.

But because of the lack of available land or replacement apartment units, and the lack of funding for comprehensive improvements on the existing structure, tearing down the sickly green building and starting from scratch became the solution.

To achieve this, HAP will need more than \$30 million, double what Oregon received from the recent federal stimulus bill for public housing. For this reason they'll be

returning to the successful strategy used for their New Columbia and Humboldt Gardens properties—applying for a HOPE VI grant (a program that recently received \$120 million) from the federal government.

Such said the agency's track record in earning the grants makes it a competitive candidate the third time around. HAP will be asking for \$20 million from HOPE VI, with an additional \$25 million needed from local government funding for the remaining construction and operating costs.

HAP has already begun collecting application materials and approaching the community for support, having detailed the plan at the Multnomah Neighborhood Association's meeting in March. Application materials will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development this fall, with a response expected in 2010.

If successful, HAP will begin construction in 2011 with an estimated completion date in the spring of 2013. During that time, current residents would be relocated to other HAP properties appropriate for their needs, and

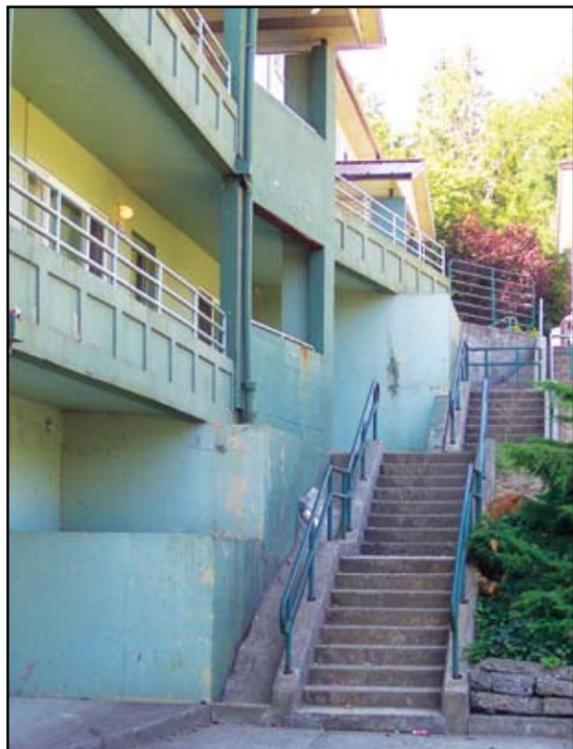
offered a chance to move back in when construction is completed.

Hillsdale Terrace presently houses 237 low-income residents, over half of them children. The site's redesign would include improved play areas for the younger residents, whose playground often sits in a pond of water because of the poor soil.

Only three percent of the residents are seniors, a figure that HAP would like to change. Preliminary design plans include 30 units of senior housing within an expanded complex of 115 units.

As one of the only low-income housing complexes in Southwest Portland, Hillsdale Terrace offers the advantage of proximity to the area's high-quality schools, parks, services, and public transit.

Such said she hopes redeveloping the property will enhance residents' relationships with the surrounding community and lead to future partnerships between the agency and Southwest Portland neighborhoods. "This is an opportunity to make Hillsdale Terrace a property we can all be proud of."



The Housing Authority of Portland is putting together an application for a federal HOPE VI grant to completely redevelop its Hillsdale Terrace site in Southwest Portland. The 63-unit apartment complex houses 237 low-income residents. (Photo courtesy of HAP)

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