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The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

INSIDE:

New sidewalks,
trees and swales
planned for
Multnomah Village
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Macadam Avenue neighbors at loggerheads over Sellwood Bridge alignment

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Last month some 60 residents along Southwest Miles Place south of Wilamette Park, and the Macadam Bay houseboat moorage north of the Sellwood Bridge, offered testimony on how future access to Macadam Bay should be provided.

Each of the two camps professed good will toward the other, and each championed a solution that the other found abhorrent.

As part of the construction of a new Sellwood Bridge, Multnomah County and the Oregon Department of Transportation plan to move Highway 43 (Southwest Macadam Avenue) slightly to the east, making the old Macadam Bay driveway unusable.

Project staff has developed a dozen alternative proposals for a new access. Some would have the driveway go through Freeman Motors and utilize its existing driveway.

Others would create a new road through Southwest Miles Place or Miles Street, expanding and improving that road to handle increased traffic. The cost estimates ranged from \$3 million

to \$6 million.

Dennis Mitchell of ODOT said that his agency could not agree to install a new traffic signal anywhere on Macadam because it did not meet professional standards, or "warrants," to justify such an installation. The only existing signalized intersection on this part of Macadam is at Southwest Miles Street and Taylors Ferry Road.

Miles Place residents spoke to its unique character. "I've never felt such a sense of community as on Miles Place," Denis Schure said. "That alley is primarily a pedestrian and bike environment."

Using it for Macadam Bay traffic would mean a phenomenal increase in cars that would obliterate it," Schure said.

Douglas Barbour, who said he was "born and raised" on Miles Place, recalled ice being delivered by horse-drawn carriage on the street, and coal by truck.

Denise Kronowski, whose father lives on Miles Place, said, "I'd hate to see it changed." A new access road there would, among other things, necessitate the removal of Butterfly Park on the north end of Miles Place.

"I think other options would serve Macadam Bay," she said. Using Free-



Denis Schure stands near his house on Southwest Miles Place. To preserve his narrow street, Schure is in favor of a U-turnaround at Taylors Ferry Road as well as a new driveway to access Macadam Bay houseboats next to Freeman Motors. (Post photo by Don Snedecor)

man Motors would involve "overall the least risk, and remove the fewest trees."

Several business owners on Miles Street said that additional traffic there would interfere with access and force them to move, or at least downsize and lay off workers.

Some Miles residents and businesses belittled the negative impact to Macadam Bay of a Freeman Motors access. Attorney Keith Benjamin, representing Autoworks Northwest, said the proposed access will leave Freeman Mo-

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School district educates Hillsdale neighbors on possible construction bond measure

By Jillian Daley
The Southwest Portland Post

Since voters rejected a \$548 million bond to upgrade Portland school

buildings on May 17, 2011, school district officials have been reaching out to the community to find out why the bond failed and what the community wants.

Nearly a year later, an educational

presentation May 2 before the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association seemed particularly timely. It was just shy of the one-year anniversary of the day voters said "no" to the bond by a margin of about 600 votes.

Hillsdale neighbors listened to Portland Public Schools spokeswoman Erin Hoover-Barnett, who touched on not only the failed bond but also massive cuts the school district is proposing to close a \$27.5 million budget shortfall next fiscal year. The school board is scheduled to adopt the 2012-13 school budget on June 25. Next fiscal year begins July 1.

Hoover-Barnett pointed to sparks of hope for Portland schools: student performance at academic milestones such as seventh grade writing rose by at least five percentage points from 2009-10 to 2010-11. The performance gap between white students and students of color also narrowed, Barnett said.

She added that the outreach effort has deepened the school district's community connection. Another construction bond could be on the table, depending on whether the school board, after looking at community input, decides in June to refer a bond to the ballot in November 2012 or May 2013.

Voters did approve a local option levy that also was on the May 2011 ballot, which pays for teachers and operational support, but the construction bond's failure halted the school district's plans to renovate and rebuild schools.

One Hillsdale neighbor asked whether students need buildings in a time when they can do much of their work online. Hoover-Barnett said many students may not have a place to study at home, and a teacher's guidance helps.

One man said he might have voted for the construction bond had he known schools were suffering so severely financially.

Hoover-Barnett said the failure of the construction bond is not directly tied to the school district's financial situation because such a bond could only have been used to build buildings.

An informational sheet she gave neighbors laid out the school district's main financial problems: K-12 education's share of Oregon's state biennial budget decreased from 45 percent in 2003-05 to 39 percent in 2011-13.

The recession, which lowered home values, decreased property tax collections, so the local option levy for staffing that passed last spring is bringing in less money than school officials had projected. Student enrollment is growing.

Cuts to balance the beleaguered budget could include 110 teaching positions (worth \$10 million) and 34 central office positions.

Neighborhood association president Mikal Apenes said at the May 2 meeting that his family stays in Portland because of the quality schools. As budgets cut school programs and pare back staff, other states' schools

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Portland Public Schools' Erin Hoover-Barnett, HNA president Mikal Apenes, PPS board member Ruth Adkins and Wilson High School principal Sue Brent, discuss the next construction bond at the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association meeting, May 2. (Post photo by Jillian Daley)

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Portland, OR 97206