

Some projects mysteriously cut from the draft list; What about Hoot Owl Corner?

SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Citizens, as well as officials, have weighed in on the Southwest Corridor Plan process. Last month project staff published a list of individual capitol improvement projects that would accompany the five alternative transit improvement projects recommended for the area.

These five include one light rail line from Portland to Tigard. The others are "bus rapid transit" routes from Portland to Tigard, Tualatin or Sherwood, plus a looser "hub and spoke" plan potentially providing enhanced bus service to other destinations.

Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz, recently appointed to represent Portland on the project's Steering Committee, asked why citizen groups were not consulted before the list was compiled.

Others are concerned as well. Roger Averbeck, Southwest Neighborhood, Inc. transportation committee chair, complained that some projects were on some alternative lists and not on others. "Hoot Owl Corner on Southwest Capitol Highway at 30th Avenue, the Southwest Garden Home Road and Multnomah Boulevard intersection, and Southwest Terwilliger Boulevard north of Barbur were not included at all," said Averbeck. Mostly, however, he was unhappy with the process.

"They didn't talk to us first, they just put what they wanted on the list," Averbeck complained. "This is public information, not public involvement."

SWNI board chair Marianne Fitzgerald had similar complaints. According to Fitzgerald, Metro staff first put forward a long list of potential projects within the corridor, and then released its final list in February.

"There was no public process at all

between the publishing of the first and second lists," Fitzgerald said. "Now they say we can remove things from the list, but we can't add to it. It just floored me."

Metro spokesperson Cliff Higgins agreed with Fitzgerald that Metro hadn't accepted public input on their list of projects and wouldn't add to it now. However, he told the Post, planners did receive a public buyoff on their methodology. Moreover, Higgins said, the list is merely being used to evaluate the five alternatives, and does not mean that other projects won't be funded as part of the Southwest Corridor.

West Portland Town Center designation reemerges in Barbur Concept Plan

As *The Post* goes to press, the Barbur Concept Plan is scheduled to be heard by the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission on February 26. However, the Plan's main point of controversy appears to have been smoothed over: a proposal to eliminate the West Portland Town Center.

The Plan is an effort to examine Southwest Barbur Boulevard, and adjacent streets, to decide what sort of development should go on different parts of it, and what sort of public improvements are needed to achieve these results.

The Barbur Concept Plan is a local counter-part to the Southwest Corridor Plan, a regional effort that will consider whether to put light rail, or some other mass transit improvement, through this corridor.

West Portland Town Center has been controversial since Metro so designated the area near the confluence of Barbur and Southwest Capitol Highway in 1996.

Metro's 2040 Plan calls for high density residential development as well as pedestrian and transit-oriented commercial uses in designated town centers.

The designation was a source of con-

flict during the Southwest Community Plan process between neighborhood activists who wanted to see such development occur and those who did not.

In fact, no such development has occurred in the intervening years, and City staff members have come to doubt that it ever will, even if massive amounts of money were spent on public improvements.

For that reason, a draft of the Barbur Concept Plan's final report suggested that Metro and the City "reconsider" the Town Center designation.

This alarmed activists such as Roger Averbeck, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc transportation committee chair.

"All the alternatives for high capacity transit go through the West Portland Town Center," he told the *Post*. "This is the big one."

Withdrawal of the "town center" designation could endanger the chances of securing funding for needed changes, he said.

The message was heard. City Project Manager Jay Sugnet shared a memo

with the *The Post* that said, "A town center planning effort should be conducted, in conjunction with an access and circulation study, to develop a community vision and strategic plan for the area."

Southwest kicks off Comprehensive Plan process

Multnomah Arts Center was the host last month to the first of seven public workshops on the proposed new Portland Comprehensive Plan. About 40 people attended the session.

The Comprehensive Plan will update a document in place since 1980, and will set regulations governing public activities and private development through the year 20-35.

Based on feedback received at the session, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability staff will prepare a draft plan for public review in the fall.

A large percentage of the written comments received addressed trans-

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