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Multnomah traffic-calming campaign aims to get attention of drivers
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Snowmageddon!



Lucy and Tony Quinn of Multnomah measure snow depth on their deck Feb. 8. Snowstorm story and photo essay on Pages 4-5. (Photo by Joanie Quinn)

Southwest Corridor Plan rolls on with full cast of characters and issues

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

The news of high capacity transit planning has been in the news lately. Everything from tunnels under Hillsdale, MAX lines down Barbur Boulevard, and bus rapid transit have been proposed.

Nothing has been decided yet. The budget is not set. Barbur Boulevard is not going down to one lane each way. Bike lanes will not be sacrificed.

The mission is to bring some kind of rapid transit service, either bus or light rail, along Highway 99W between Portland State University and Sherwood.

There seems to be a role for anyone who's interested. To address this, the Southwest Corridor Plan Portland Working Group has been formed. It has been meeting monthly since November.

The participants have read like a list of who's who of Southwest Portland. Almost every Southwest neighborhood and business association has been represented.

Residents, business and property owners have had influential voices.

Media, college students, and various staff of elected officials have also been in attendance.

The city of Portland, TriMet, Metro, Oregon Department of Transportation, Portland Bureau of Transportation, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. and adjoining jurisdictional partners have all been part of the mix. From a reporter's perspective, working with just one of these entities can be a daunting task.

One of the main challenges has been the variety of issues posed by the Southwest Corridor Plan team in order to appease bicyclists, pedestrians, and commuters, while meeting strict environmental regulations and addressing mass transit needs for a growing southwest community.

According to TriMet, over a quarter of the Portland metro workforce commutes from Southwest. There are a variety of ways to become involved in the Southwest Corridor Plan.

First of all, become familiar with the website, www.oregonmetro.gov. A list of all the partners, decision making process, and timeline can be found here.

Second, consider attending the South-

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Portland teachers' union strike averted Feb. 20 after 11th hour deal

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

After months of negotiations, Portland Public School and Portland Association of Teachers agreed on a tentative deal that suspended the proposed strike Feb. 20. At press time, the two sides had not officially approved the deal.

The teachers union had voted to strike at a special meeting Feb. 5 at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

If the conceptual agreement is approved, teachers and administrators can get back to the business of serving the 47,000 students of Oregon's largest school district.

Parents can breathe a sigh of relief that they don't have to worry about child care or what to do with idle kids, athletes can finish up their winter sport season, and seniors can again count the days down to graduation.

"With the latest snow closures," one parent said, "we weren't looking forward to more delays in the school day."

The main issues were oversized classrooms, increasing workload, adding more school days, language about standardized testing, and providing fair compensation.

"It has never been about salary, they just want to sustain what has been promised," one Southwest high school teacher stated.

"PPS paid a state consultant \$15,000 a month for the last 18 months to work on mediation for the district! I'm in the wrong field!"

The Portland Association of Teachers and Portland Public Schools worked over 10 months to reach a negotiated settlement at the eleventh hour that

prevented a strike.

"Today, our schools are open as usual, our teachers are in their classrooms and our students are engaged in learning," Superintendent Carole Smith said. "I am really pleased we are in this place today and I share our whole community's sense of relief."

Smith went on to say, "I want to acknowledge that the process of bargaining this contract has been long and, at times, difficult for everyone involved. Through it all, both teams stayed committed to crafting a better labor agreement."

The Portland Association of Teachers will soon announce their process for ratifying the agreement. If the tentative agreement is ratified by their membership, the proposal will then go before the Portland School Board for ratification.

Smith said she hopes all of this will happen within the next few weeks.

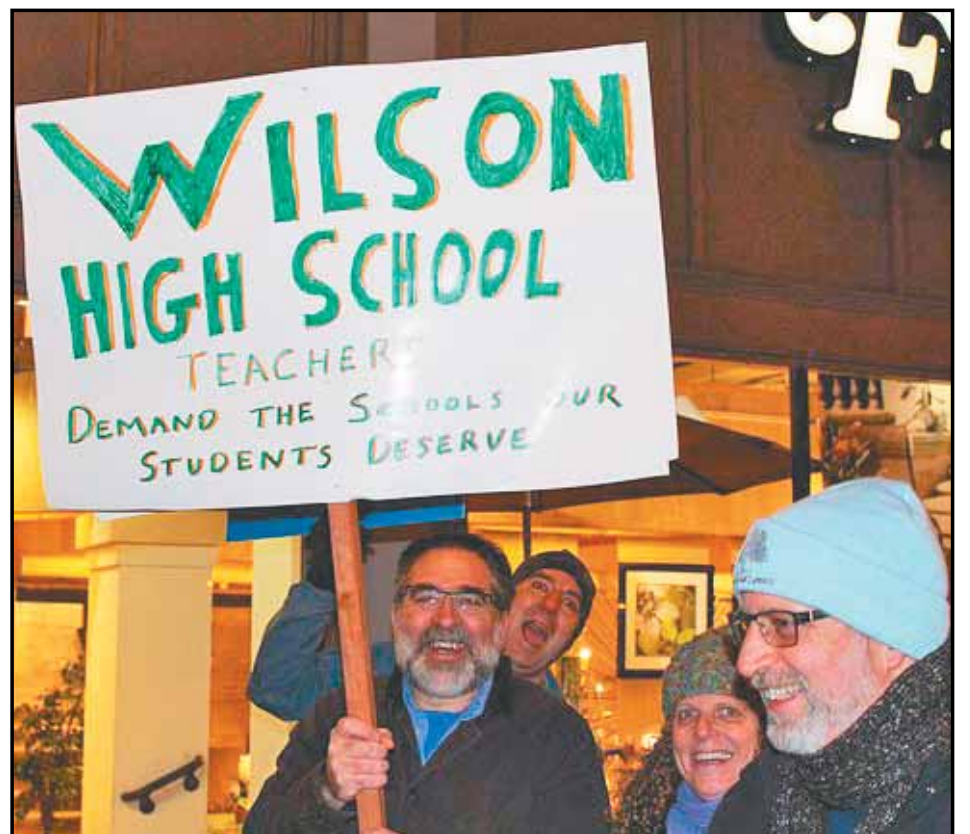
"I would like to thank all of our community partners who stepped forward with offers to help us keep our students safe and fed in the event of a possible strike," Smith said.

Trying to capture the story proved difficult for this reporter. Another high school teacher, who also wished to remain anonymous, summed it up.

"Every teacher I know has a slightly different perspective on the entire (bargaining) process. I know I would not be representing perhaps even the majority.

"The issues are extremely complicated. It would take a long time and an objective, diligent reporter to uncover the complexities and undo the damage that biased reporting has done."

The details of the final agreement will not be released until both sides have ratified the deal.



Wilson High School teachers and parents demonstrate before a possible strike. (Photo courtesy of Portland Association of Teachers)

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