

Technical advisory committee considers 2025 rapid transit & tunnels

SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

On Portland’s first 80 degree day of the year, over three dozen community members sat patiently to hear technical updates from all parties involved with the Southwest Corridor Plan.

Noelle Dobson, Metro’s new community engagement specialist, vowed to facilitate the large group to make sure everyone was heard and answers provided.

“We want to look for more opportunities,” Dobson began, “to engage the community with their questions, look at upcoming meeting schedules, and to provide ways to offer input.”

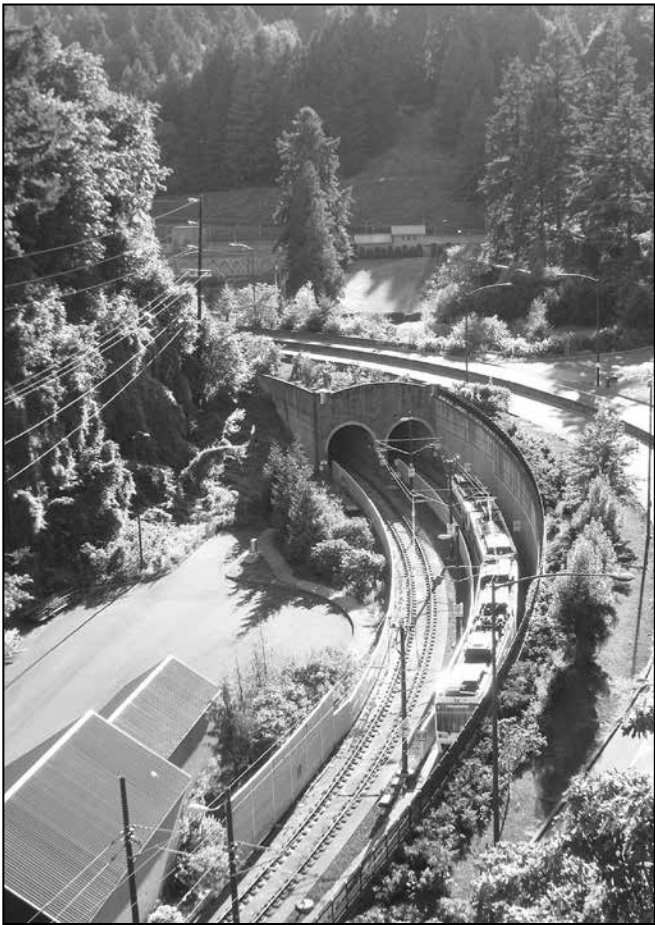
Southwest Corridor Plan Community Forum is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at Wilson High School (cafeteria)

To this reporter, who grabbed the many packets of information upon arriving, hours and hours could be spent dissecting them for Post readers to decipher.

There are so many documents in fact they can overwhelm the most literate. Key impact issues for Hillsdale, Portland Community College, and South Portland are posted online. Tunnel information and alignment modifications based on technical analysis are also available.

Add these to budget proposals and TriMet’s refined service enhancement plan. Seven different cities need to weigh in as well as Washington County, Oregon Department of Transportation, TriMet, and Metro.

Finally, the Federal Highway



East end of Robertson Tunnel at Canyon Road/Jefferson Street. Above light rail tunnel is Washington Park. (Photo by EncMstr, August 2007, courtesy Wikipedia)

Administration needs to sign off on everything after a Draft Environmental Impact Statement is submitted in January 2017.

According to Dobson, construction is still 10 to 20 years away.

Concerned readers should focus their time becoming familiar with what pertains to their particular neighborhood, expertise, or main apprehension.

Metro staff members are developing a memo for early May 2015 that will present geotechnical findings, ridership and travel time results, costs estimates, and potential disruptions that are likely to occur during construction.

There will be a comment period from May 5-19. A community forum will be held on Tues., May 12, from 6

p.m. until 8:30 p.m. at the Wilson High School cafeteria.

The following day, results will be published online, then, a second comment period will be available June 2-16.

What was on most everyone’s minds was whether tunnels would be in the picture or not, and then if they would be a cut-and-cover type, much shallower, or the deeply bored kind like the MAX tunnel that runs underneath Washington Park and the Oregon Zoo.

Darrell Wendell, a TriMet tunnel expert, was on hand to explain the ins and outs of tunneling. Wendell has also worked in Seattle on a major tunnel project.

“Tunnels must have portals,” Wendell explained, “to allow equipment, staging, and access.”

So far, TriMet has recommended one tunnel portal be placed at Duniway Park, near PSU; the other near the Rieke Elementary sports field.

Wendell went on to say that it is quite uncertain what all this would look like until excavation actually began.

“We’re dealing with fault lines, water tables, and who knows what else,” Wendell said. “Of course disruptions may occur such as vibrations, and some ground settling, but our equipment measures all of these.”

Anthony Buczek, a Metro traffic engineer, explained mitigating traffic solutions which would involve timing of traffic lights, new turn lanes, and new sidewalks.

“We have projected traffic issues by the year 2035 or 2040,” Buczek quantified with detailed maps and numbers spit out by a computer

(Continued on Page 6)



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