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Developer defends proposed four-story apartment building in Multnomah Village

By KC Cowan
The Southwest Portland Post

One sign of the interest in a proposed 71-unit apartment building in Multnomah Village came when the regular meeting of the Multnomah



Developer Tim O'Brien answers questions about his proposed four-story apartment building at the Multnomah Neighborhood Association meeting on June 9.
(Post photo by KC Cowan)

Neighborhood Association moved from Room 30 of the Multnomah Center to the auditorium.

Smart move, as nearly 150 people came to hear the developer and architect explain the project and unveil the first artistic renderings.

As proposed, the building will offer studio, one and two bedroom rental units, with ground-floor retail on Southwest Capitol Highway.

It would replace the Children's Program at Southwest 33rd Avenue and Capitol Highway, and a small house located next door to the building housing Annastasia Salon and the



An artist's concept of the proposed four-story apartment building at Southwest 33rd and Capitol Highway
(Urban Asset Advisors)

Starbucks coffee shop. It will stand four stories tall, higher than any other building in the village.

Former neighborhood chair Martie Sucec opened with an explanation of zoning issues and density.

Despite petitions to stop the project set out on the sign-in table, Sucec stressed that neighbors are not against development. "But we want to be at the table with everybody else, not just city

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Bicyclists conduct road safety audit on Vermont, Newbury bridges

BARBUR BRIDGE PEDAL

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

It's not news that Southwest Barbur Boulevard is unsafe for all users whether one walks, bikes, or drives, especially from Multnomah Boulevard to Hamilton Street. Six motorists and one pedestrian have died in recent years from unsafe conditions.

To bring this point to the public, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance has been putting pressure on the Oregon Department of Transportation to make drastic changes to this stretch of Oregon 99W. ODOT is responsible for state highways.

The BTA is a nonprofit organization promoting bicycling and improving bicycling conditions in Oregon. They just celebrated 25 years of service.

According to the BTA, recent structural improvements on the Vermont and Newbury bridges have made them no safer for bicyclists than they were before

construction began.

The bridges lack legal sidewalks and bike lanes. Bicycle riders must merge with speeding traffic.

"While this process may be necessary for designing engineering solutions," said Carl Larson, BTA engagement manager, "we already know that Barbur is unsafe."

So, on June 15, one of the warmest evenings of the year, ten cyclists conducted a mock safety audit of Barbur Boulevard. The group, sponsored by the BTA, rode from ODOT's Old Town headquarters (123 NW Flanders St.) south to the Vermont and Newbury bridges.

The ride was aimed at building awareness about the highway's deficiencies and encouraging quick action to correct them.

In order to capture the essence of the problem, this reporter decided to tag along with the two-wheeled activists, underinflated tires and all.

"Barbur serves mass transit, pedestrians, vehicles and freight traffic, as well as cyclists," explained Don Hamilton, ODOT's public information

officer. "We have additional priorities from downtown all the way to Sherwood."

It also becomes a relief valve for Interstate 5 when things go wrong on the freeway.

"We had to repair the old bridges," said Hamilton, "but widening them was way too expensive." Only flashing beacons were installed to alert motorists that bicyclists were sharing the roadway on the bridges.

Hamilton commented that ODOT will be facilitating an independent study of the bridges by the end of the summer. It will include engineers, law enforcement, neighborhood leaders, and bicyclists.

The study will also serve as a guide to the Southwest Corridor Plan which is in its planning stages.

Larson led the ride which first headed across the Burnside Bridge to pay respect to the pedestrian that was killed on June 14 by an out of control vehicle.

While this reporter is somewhat out of shape and does not have bike legs or lungs, the ride went reasonably well. The sights and smells of downtown restaurants, diesel trucks, and wafts of marijuana permeated the warm evening air and were more evident than by just driving home in a car.

But one has to be very aware. Car doors can catapult a cyclist. Inpatient drivers navigate their cars sometimes with one finger in the air. And road obstacles are everywhere: road

kill, glass, gravel, and even pedestrians texting while walking.

One of the riders, Damian Miller, said he commutes every day from Southeast to Lewis & Clark College. He said he has been pretty frustrated at ODOT ever since he attended the bridge construction open house years ago.

"ODOT didn't do a thing for cyclists," Miller yelled while navigating numerous flares and large rocks once the group passed Hamilton Street "All they did was put up flashing lights which are too close to the bridge for motorists to respond to in adequate time."

As the group got closer to the first bridge (where Beaverton-Hillsdale

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Bicyclists measure and take notes on the thin bike ledge on the Newbury Bridge along Barbur Boulevard.
(Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

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