

Light rail tunnel to Portland Community College still under consideration

SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

On July 13, the Southwest Corridor Plan Steering Committee will ponder whether several high capacity transit alignments under consideration in Southwest Portland will continue to be studied as part of the project.

The proposed cut-and-cover tunnel to Portland Community College Sylvania will be decided in October after the project team conducts additional analysis this summer.

They plan to carry out more public outreach to better understand impacts and to learn more about future campus plans.

If high capacity transit runs along Barbur Boulevard, the most direct access point to the campus would be 53rd Avenue, which is currently unimproved for the majority of its length.

Conceptual designs for a new streetscape are now underway, focusing on enhanced pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

According to a Metro staff report, this connection, paired with new frequent service on the TriMet Line 44 bus, would encourage more students to select transit, which would reduce parking demand on campus and traffic in the surrounding neighborhoods.

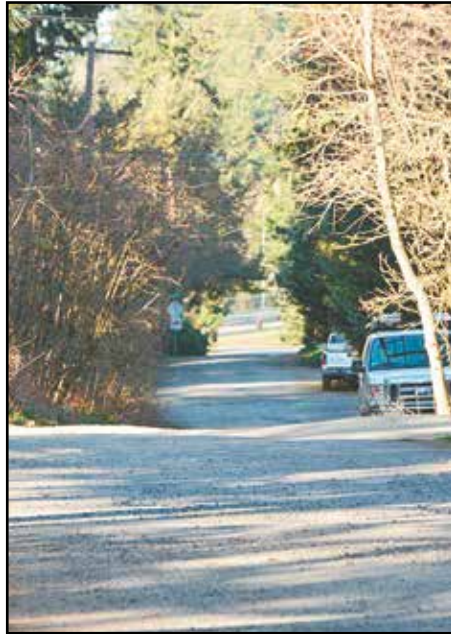
Neighbors who live on 53rd Avenue said they are not happy and have collected over 60 signatures in opposition. The potential design would require relocation of several dozen residents in the Far Southwest Neighborhood Association for at least a year.

According to a May 2015 report from Metro, "All surface features above the tunnel alignment or the station must be removed."

"This means the loss of, or loss of access to, nearly 45 homes and businesses along Southwest 53rd Avenue," explained Far Southwest co-chair Marcia Leslie.

According to Leslie, Far Southwest residents have expressed support for high capacity transit either along Capitol Highway or Barbur Boulevard but they have strong opposition to the tunnel.

"In addition, the 53rd tunnel will be twice as deep, requiring deeper shoring walls and removal and replacement of twice as much soil and twice as many truckloads to haul it away and back,"



Today, Southwest 53rd Avenue is a quiet, partially unpaved connection between Barbur Boulevard and Portland Community College Sylvania campus. One of the options under consideration would lay a light rail tunnel beneath the street. (Photo courtesy Metro)

said Leslie.

Planners said they want more time to explore whether a light rail or bus rapid transit stop on Barbur Boulevard could provide a practicable alternative for serving the community college.

Shuttle buses or even a mechanized "people mover" could feasibly help bridge the half-mile distance to campus.

"The college has been increasingly engaged in the project, and connecting to PCC is an important goal," Southwest Corridor Plan manager Chris Ford commented. "But there are notable concerns about the impacts of a tunnel."

"Several more months would allow us more time to talk to the community and PCC and work to see if there are ways to reduce the impacts of tunnel construction."

Planners hope to identify a preferred package with a short list of high capacity transit route options, along with supportive roadway, local bus, bike and walking improvements, by spring 2016.

The project will then enter a much more detailed, federally-mandated impact study before choosing a final route in 2018.

Metro staff recommends axing OHSU to Hillsdale light rail tunnel

The staff proposed removing the Oregon Health & Sciences University

to Hillsdale tunnel from further consideration. They want to study other ways of accessing Marquam Hill, where the OHSU campus sits.

Comments at a Metro open house held at Wilson High School, and from online surveys, overwhelmingly said the Hillsdale cut-and-cover tunnel alignments were a bad deal. There will be more studies for improving access to the Hillsdale town center.

Planners said the impacts and costs of deep-bored tunnels beneath Marquam Hill and Hillsdale and a shorter loop to serve just Hillsdale via Capitol Highway/Bertha Boulevard are just too great.

Staff noted that Hillsdale is already well-served by frequent local buses, and TriMet is planning improvements as part of its Southwest Service Enhancement Plan.

"Substantial construction impacts on nearby neighborhoods and sensitive

medical facilities at OHSU," Southwest Corridor Plan manager Chris Ford said, "drove the recommendation to remove a Marquam Hill light rail tunnel from further consideration.

Ford explained that the vibration and physical damage to Duniway Park, for the north portal construction site, and the constant truck traffic over multiple years in Lair Hill and Hillsdale were major community costs.

"The price tag for this project alone didn't weigh the community costs," Ford confessed.

Instead, the plan will focus on Barbur Boulevard or Naito Parkway. One idea has proposed elevators or escalators connecting to OHSU. This would provide improved service to Marquam Hill with fewer neighborhood impacts and at lower costs. Stay tuned.

Want to contact Southwest Corridor Plan staff? Call 503-813-7535 or email swcorridorplan@oregonmetro.gov.



Dotted line is proposed tunnel from OHSU to Hillsdale. (Map courtesy of Metro)

I-5 Paving & Signs Project

Capitol Highway to Lombard Street

Oregon Department of Transportation is improving highway signage and repaving sections of I-5 in Portland.

SIGNAGE WORK

- SW Corbett Avenue to N Lombard Street (I-5) and the Fremont Bridge (I-405)
- Improves or replaces freeway signage
- Will require full nighttime freeway closures

PAVING WORK

- Begins late spring/ early summer 2015
- SW Capitol Highway to the Marquam Bridge (I-5)
- Includes work on on-ramps, off-ramps and some freeway bridges

GOOD TO KNOW

- All lanes and ramps open during the day
- Visit www.I5PavingandSigns.org for the latest information
- Project info line: (503) 731-4663
Este número ofrece información en español

Parker Realty, Inc.

Vermont Hills
\$535,000

Impeccable Vermont Hills traditional with triple car garage and loads of storage. Large master suite upstairs, with vaulted ceilings, fireplace, walk in closet and custom bath, along with 3 additional bedrooms and another full bath. Gourmet kitchen with attached family room with sliders to large deck, perfect for entertaining. Gleaming Brazilian hardwoods. Bonus room over garage with wet bar, bath and door to deck. Convenient quiet location with views.

The inventory of houses for sale in the Portland Metro area remains at historic lows. High demand for homes in our area coupled with low interest rates and lack of homes for sale translates to higher prices! If you are thinking of selling contact us today for a free market analysis.

503-977-1888 • 7830 SW 35th Ave., Portland, OR
www.parkerrealtypdx.com

Jeff Parker
Your Neighborhood Realtor Since 1980