

State commission to provide development criteria for future MAX line

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

In August, Governor Kate Brown signed House Bill 3202 providing procedures and requirements for establishing criteria for citing of the Southwest Corridor MAX Light Rail Project.

The bill requires the Land Conservation and Development Commission to establish criteria to be used by the Metro Council to adopt a land use final order approving project improvements and locations for the light rail.

The new transit line is not under one government jurisdiction. In this case, the proposed line would cross two counties (Multnomah and Washington) and three cities (Portland, Tigard, and Tualatin).

The commission held a hearing in late September in La Grande to consider the proposed criteria. The results of the hearing were not available at press time.

HB 3202 creates a streamlined process for a single final order that would authorize the light rail route. It does not directly approve the location for the light rail line but directs the commission to set criteria for reviewing the proposed project based on relevant statewide planning goals and local plan policies.

It also provides an expedited process to handle any appeals of the criteria. According to the commission,

approvals may include “reasonable and necessary conditions of approval and by themselves or cumulatively, prevent implementation of a land use final order.”

Highway improvements include ancillary facilities such as retaining walls, bridges, signals, electrification equipment, lighting equipment, staging areas, facilities for bus or rail travel, stormwater facilities, wetland mitigation facilities, and facilities designed for vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

At the September meeting of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, land use chair Jim Peterson reminded members that the association had filed objections to zoning changes in the Portland Comprehensive Plan.

“The city could increase the capacity of residential units along Barbur [Boulevard] by 28 percent,” Peterson said. “This should be a public process.”

Peterson wrote the commission on Sept. 22. “We are concerned that the criteria need [strengthening] to protect single family housing.

“These criteria originated from the light rail project along North Interstate and Portland’s planning policies have engendered widespread displacement and gentrification.

“Criteria need to be modified to reflect the nature of Southwest neighborhoods and to protect the existing character.

“The Multnomah Neighborhood



The cities of Portland and Tigard, along with Metro, are developing an Equitable Housing Strategy for the Southwest Corridor. An Affordable Housing event is being held on Oct. 14 at Markham School. Visit www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/equitablehousing for details. (Photo courtesy of City of Portland)

Association also requests that there be a public hearing for testimony within the affected area.”

According to Eric Engstrom, the principal planner from the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, large scale land use changes are probably not necessary.

“The land use designations generally already enable transit-supportive density along the corridor,” Engstrom said.

There were three things that Engstrom said the city may consider in the future.

“In some locations,” Engstrom said, “we may want to make parcel-specific land use and zoning adjustments to better reflect opportunities for station area redevelopment, but this can’t happen until we finalize station locations.”

Engstrom wrote that there also may be some minor zoning boundary adjustments to reflect street alignment changes, for example, at the Ross Island Bridge.

“In some areas of the corridor,” Engstrom wrote, “the land use designations of the comp plan would enable higher density zoning than will be initially in place in 2018.”

Engstrom explained that in the vicinity of the Barbur Transit Center and the Burlingame Fred Meyer, the short term zoning is CM2, commercial mixed-use, intended for medium scale projects.

“The town center designation at those locations would enable consideration of CM3, large-scale commercial mixed-use, near high capacity transit station

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