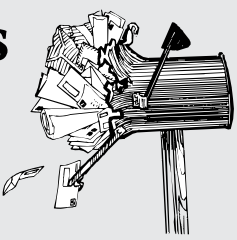


Letters to the Editor



The Southwest Portland Post
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Re: "Letters: Future light rail alignment should be along Interstate 5," by Don Baack, December 2017.

Reader prefers light rail alignment along Interstate 5

Light rail through Southwest Portland has two options on the table right now between Terwilliger Boulevard and the Barbur Transit Station.

Next to Interstate 5, and down the middle of Barbur Boulevard.

Stations for both are accessed from Barbur Boulevard. Boarding on the Interstate 5 alignment is behind the current row of businesses along the street.

This is just as close to all pedestrians due to the Barbur Boulevard-located stations needing to be located half a block from the intersection in order to provide space in the street for necessary left turn lanes.

Transit service to our residents is essentially the same. The difference

is how Barbur Boulevard serves our community.

We presently use Barbur Boulevard to connect among our neighborhoods, and to carry out our routine shopping for gas and tires, groceries and drugs, fast foods, and more.

Because it has the capacity to carry overflow from a clogged Interstate 5, we can live and circulate in our daily lives.

New businesses keep arriving, and more will come when the transit alignment is set.

As I observe light rail lines in other cities, I rarely see a vibrant business community facing the street filled with light rail.

With light rail on Barbur Boulevard, the future use of the right-of-way and all traffic movements will be dictated by its presence.

We will lose the entire center of the street to two rail lines and associated passenger stations.

Left turns to access our neighborhoods and businesses will be limited to crossings every several blocks.

The business community will have a physical and visual barrier separating the street, decreasing their ability to attract customers.

Barbur Boulevard will not be able to handle as many cars, bringing increased congestion when Interstate 5 comes to a stop and the traffic heads for the local streets.

With this congestion, the local streets become our neighborhood streets carrying more traffic.

The city of Portland has expressed a continuing bias towards the Barbur Boulevard alignment because they then have funds to rebuild the state highway.

That is the only basis for preferring light rail on Barbur Boulevard.

By using the Interstate 5 alignment, no new barrier is created; light rail service is faster due to lack of the local street intersections; pedestrians walk no farther to board the train; noise is better constrained by being behind the buildings.

Barbur Boulevard is better able to evolve as the community envisioned in the Barbur Concept Plan.

Glenn Bridger
Hillsdale

No evidence of overt bias toward any alternative route has been identified

Is the city staff biased toward the Barbur Boulevard alignment?

Working as a member of the Southwest Corridor Light Rail Project Community Advisory Committee that provides recommendations to the steering committee since the summer of 2017; no evidence of overt bias towards any alternative route has been identified.

However, there is an initial widespread support for light rail on Barbur Boulevard among long-standing community leaders because it is perceived that the Barbur Boulevard route will attract more MAX ridership and other non-automotive modes of transportation as previous neighborhood and city collaborative studies have indicated in the past: the Barbur Streetscape Plan in 1999 and the Barbur Concept Plan in 2013.

A critical factor in considering alternative routes for light rail is the determination as to which routes will ultimately provide greater ridership in the long run.

This is not a "bias," but objective

criteria that all decision makers are evaluating; and this analysis is ongoing as more information is collected.

No conclusions have yet been reached prior to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement that is scheduled to be released early next year.

Is it true that if the train is placed on Barbur Boulevard, the impact on the adjacent neighborhoods will be significant as slowed Barbur Boulevard traffic seeks alternative routes?

Maybe this is true initially during the construction process and as the local communities adjust to alternative forms of transportation; but no conclusions can yet be reached about the long term impact at this early stage.

The central purpose of providing light rail on Barbur, and augmenting adjacent bike lanes and sidewalks, is to give the communities alternative modes of transportation from Portland to Tigard; and as far as Tualatin.

Additionally, if tracks are placed along I-5 instead of Barbur there will be impact on current residential properties as well.

All concerned community members should contact TriMet and Metro leadership and examine the light rail concept maps that they are developing for all the alternative routes.

There is impact on adjacent residential and commercial properties along all alternate routes being considered for light rail tracks.

Vasilios (Bill) Garyfallou

Editor's Note: What appears above is an excerpt from a larger commentary. Mr. Garyfallou is part of a group developing property along Barbur Boulevard between 17th and 19th avenues.

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