

## Metro staff proposes initial light rail route from Portland to Tigard

### SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

By Erik Vidstrand  
The Southwest Portland Post

On March 19, Southwest Corridor community advisory committee members met and received the initial route proposal of the proposed light rail project.

The committee's purpose has been to review project components so they can recommend a preferred alternative route for the 12-mile light rail line between Portland and Tualatin.

According to Eryn Kehe, the project's senior communications specialist, there are just a few meetings left for the committee.

Several members represent the advisory group at Metro steering committee meetings. In turn, the steering committee will make recommendations to the Metro Council who will then make final decisions on the locally preferred alternative route.

Metro Councilor Bob Stacey was present at the meeting and thanked the committee for its service.

"You have gone deeper and have asked more questions than the steering committee," Stacey said. "Keep it up for about 60 more days. Make your decision in a timely manner so we can stay on schedule within a time frame that the federal government has provided."

Chris Ford, Metro project manager, and Dave Unsworth, TriMet director



of capital projects, were on hand to provide updates.

Unsworth explained the proposed route comes with some modifications to reduce operating cost, minimize impacts identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Study, and improve travel time and ridership.

He shared maps of the route beginning at Portland State University. These can all be found on Metro's website.

"Barbur Boulevard has been selected as the route of choice versus Naito Parkway," he said. "The tracks will travel down Barbur Boulevard until the Barbur Transit Center. From there, it crosses Interstate 5 on a new bridge and then runs adjacent to the freeway to Tigard."

"Selecting Barbur over Naito provides a shorter connection up to Marquam Hill," Unsworth said. "It has a faster travel time and fewer property impacts."

"The Ross Island bridgehead improvements are necessary and some

traffic mitigation will be needed. We will work with the city of Portland to make this happen which is very high on the city's list."

The proposed route along Barbur Boulevard will also circum-

vent the two existing viaducts [Newbury and Vermont] and avoid historic and park impacts.

Michael Kisor, the bicycling and pedestrian advocate representative, wants to ensure improvements to the future train viaducts.

"The current viaducts along Barbur are very dangerous and narrow," he said. "Improvements for pedestrians and bicycles should be included on a wider viaduct to include the safety features."

From Hillsdale to the Barbur Transit Center, Kisor said stations will be more accessible and attractive. Fewer property displacements are anticipated and Metro planners hope to avoid a complex bridge reconstruction over Interstate 5.

Unsworth explained that after the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is released, most likely in late May, there will be additional comments. "All public comments will be accepted for 45 days," he said.

The West Portland Crossroads

(where Barbur Boulevard intersects with Capitol Highway) is expensive and proposes challenges, Kehe said.

"Please tell us what you like about this area and what works or not," he said.

A meeting with the leaders of several neighborhoods surrounding the Crossroads will be held early this month.

"We [will] meet together to discuss ways to share information and solicit feedback from leadership and members of the specific neighborhood associations affected in this area," Kehe said.

The team is exploring a new option that involves a MAX station at the current location of the Barbur Transit Station.

The light rail would then travel along Taylors Ferry Road. After crossing Capitol Highway, it would cross a new bridge that carries the light rail over Interstate 5 and then travel along the side of Interstate 5 to a station at 53rd Avenue.

"We are planning community events this May and June to solicit neighborhood input about the DEIS and the initial route proposal," Kehe said.

*What's next? The Southwest Corridor community advisory committee will meet on Monday, April 2, from 6:15 – 8:45 p.m. The Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Transportation Committee will meet at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 16. Both committees will meet at the Multnomah Arts Center, 7688 SW Capitol Highway.*

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