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Latest plans call for Taylors Ferry Road detour at Barbur Crossroads

SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

At the May meeting of the Southwest Corridor community advisory committee, Metro informed members that the draft environmental impact statement release had been delayed.

According to Eryn Deeming Kehe, Metro senior communications specialist, the Federal Transit Administration is doing a deeper review of the project.

"This is one of the first major transit projects of the current federal administration," Kehe said. "The FTA has been asking us for more details. I believe the document will be delivered on June 15 at the earliest and the latest on the 29th."

There will be a 45-day public input period as soon as the draft study is released. Metro is trying to keep the

document under 150 pages.

Kehe explained the protocol for members to reach a consensus on their locally preferred alternative light rail route. Their recommendation goes to the Metro steering committee who will decide the outcome.

Matt Bihn, Metro project planner, went over some of the design modifications of the route.

"Originally," Bihn said, "a shuttle up to PCC-Sylvania was proposed on Southwest 53rd Avenue but that now has been moved to 68th."

Light rail tracks are planned to move off Barbur Boulevard near Capitol Highway continuing along Taylors Ferry Road.

"The tracks would then travel over a section of green space, over the freeway, and then over Barbur," said Bihn.

Several audience members shook their heads in disbelief when someone asked if this road was wide enough for

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In June 2015, bicyclists measured and took notes on the thin bike ledge on the Newbury viaduct along Barbur Boulevard. Metro officials recently said there isn't enough money in the budget for bicyclist and pedestrian access along new MAX track viaducts. (Post file photo by Erik Vidstrand)

How Lincoln students are fighting the city's homeless crisis



Lincoln High School students prepare meals for homeless youth through the CardsCook program. (Photo courtesy of NBC News)

By Bitia Ryan and Kait Richmond

Hank Sanders is only 17, but he knows exactly how fortunate he is to have a roof over his head and food to eat.

That's because once a week, he and 20 to 30 of his classmates at Lincoln High School, have dinner with the area's homeless youth. First they cook, and then they eat — together.

"It makes you open up your eyes," Sanders told NBC News. "You are so much more grateful for every single thing that you have, for every dollar that you're given, for every meal that is on your plate."

Sanders started the program Cards Cook — the school mascot is a car-

dinal — two years ago as a way to integrate himself and his classmates with Portland's less fortunate youth.

According to officials with Multnomah County, there are at least 700 to 800 homeless teens in the county at any given time, a number indicative of an even larger crisis that the city has been battling for years.

Government officials declared the homeless problem a "state of emergency" three years ago, citing a lack of affordable housing as one of the leading factors.

The concept of Cards Cook is simple: Student volunteers get together at a church where they prepare a planned menu of healthy meals that

they can make in large quantities. When they're done cooking, they grab some of the food and join everyone while they eat, talk and play games.

"We play the same video games, we read the same books, we watch the same movies," Sanders said. "We can relate. So with every single meal, we're making that connection stronger."

Since it began, Cards Cook has served 27,000 meals and raised thousands of dollars for the community. Perhaps their biggest contribution, however, is listening.

"They actually come out and they talk with us and they interact," said Kyle Pillsbury, a homeless 29-year-old who attends the dinners every week. "It's humanizing."

The teachers from Lincoln have also taken up their students' mission, often joining the dinners to give

lessons on everything from drawing and poetry to managing personal finances.

Henry Hooper, the program's adviser, who spent 30 years in business before becoming a teacher, is inspired by the teens.

"This is unusual," Hooper said. "That's a combination of being social entrepreneurs as well as active students. They really want to do something to make a difference, and it's extraordinary."

Sanders said he hopes to keep serving meals while working with the city to find long-term solutions to homelessness in Portland.

"There are so many negative connotations that come in people's heads when they're looking at homeless people," Hooper said. "We've got to change that. Not just as 15 students, not even as 100 students ... we've got to change it as a city together."

A version of this story was originally broadcast on NBC News with Lester Holtz on May 7.

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