

# SW Corridor Light Rail Project Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Thursday, June 4, 2020, 5:30-7 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting Summary

## Present

Chris Carpenter – Government Affairs Director, FocusPoint Communications  
Rachael Duke – Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH)  
Calista Fitzgerald – Designer, Former Tigard Planning Commission Chair  
Ethan Frelly – Tigard Chamber of Commerce, business owner  
Bill Garyfallou – Property/business owner  
Amanda Guile – Tualitin resident, commuter  
Michael Harrison – Oregon Health & Sciences University (OHSU)  
Bob Ludlum – Washington County resident, Veteran's advocate  
Melissa Moncada – Engineer, West Portland Park Neighborhood  
Rebecca Ocken – Portland Community College (PCC) Sylvania Campus  
Elise Shearer – Tigard Transportation Advisory Committee, St. Anthony Parish  
Eric Sporre – PacTrust  
Lindsey Wise – Tigard Transportation Committee, transit commuter to PSU

## Not Present

Chad Hastings – CenterCal Properties Bridgeport Village  
Ramtin Rahmani – Tigard resident, bicycle commuter to OHSU  
Ian Stude – Portland State University (PSU)

## Welcome & Introduction

Brandy Steffen, JLA

Brandy welcomed attendees to the Zoom (virtual) meeting and mentioned TriMet staff would be available to speak with them later via email or phone calls. CAC members were instructed to raise their hands (in the participant's window) or send a chat if they had a question/comment and were told the meeting was being recorded. Participants were kept on mute to reduce background noise and feedback. There were no edits to the May 2020 summary.

## Public Comment

There was one public comment.

**Craig Bell** asked about the Gibbs Street Station design and layout, specifically if it will be subterranean. Josh replied it is not and asked him to reach out via email so the community affairs team can follow up with more information and discuss this more in detail. Currently the station is planned as an above ground station with an inclined elevator connecting the station to Marquam Hill. Project designs are ongoing. Craig also wanted to know about proposed development along the Barbur frontage road as well as any possibility for development that is not specific to affordable housing. [Editor's note: Community Affairs Representative Aster Moulton connected with Craig after the meeting.]

## Message from TriMet General Manager

Doug Kelsey, TriMet

Doug began with a comment on current events and how TriMet will continue to be a part of the solution in the midst of the turbulence happening in society. TriMet strives to be safe, welcoming and inclusive. He thanked the CAC members for investing in the Southwest Corridor process with TriMet and working together to continually improve the project design, noting recent input on Marquam Hill. He emphasized that this is a project that takes time and attention to detail and CAC members have been instrumental in working with TriMet to grow and expand their reach to engage underserved communities. This feedback ensures TriMet addresses important topics such as affordable housing and helps TriMet leverage investments.

General Manager Kelsey noted TriMet is making changes to keep essential workers and riders safe during COVID by providing hand sanitizer on all buses and trains, which are also being totally disinfected, and by authorizing 30 more cleaners for facilities, which amounts to between \$8-10 million dollars a year.

General Manager Kelsey stressed the importance of investing now in project, such as the Southwest Corridor Light Rail Project, that look past where we are today to 50-75 years from now. The existing rail network is 30 years old, and it is important to have a long-term lens. He noted that a bill was just introduced in the House on infrastructure that would help projects like this so we can look at new ways to make this project happen.

**Bill** asked for more detail on “modal share” and said it was an interesting metric. He asked about how to present that to the public.

**Doug** replied how “modal share” is the equivalent of the private sector’s term, market share. It represents the total trips for public transportation: cycling, walking, transit, etc. in the region. As the region continues to grow, there is a breakdown of demand for each mode that adds up to 100%. The goal is to move away from single occupancy vehicles to reduce carbon emissions and encourage more bicycling.

**Amanda** commented she is supportive of the position to continue the purpose with the project as a means of helping the economy and wanted to echo his comment on that.

**Doug** emphasized how when you work on a project of this magnitude, materials can be locked into lower prices, so this is good timing to the market and is a good time to move forward.

**Bob** mentioned an Economist article on Europe and the decline in the use of public transit, maybe because of cheap gasoline, and was curious to know Doug’s explanation of this happening in LA, Chicago and NY.

**Doug** responded this is a topic of conversation for transit officials and is called ridership recovery; how do we get people back? TriMet is reinforcing its standards of cleanliness to a standard that people can trust. This means there is a need to sanitize and provide masks so riders feel safe. It will help to also examine the full cost of owning a car. It will take work to get ridership back up.

## Conceptual Design Report Engagement Update

Libby Winter, TriMet

Libby summarized May and June outreach and upcoming presentations. Highlights included:

- TriMet visited nine neighborhood association/stakeholder groups since April and has four more scheduled in late June.
- Amparo hosted a Spanish Zoom open house at the end of May.
  - 60 people registered and 37 attended.
  - The main questions were on COVID, funding during COVID, traffic impacts, job and contract opportunities, future fare increases, information on Park & Rides, low-income fare information and how people can be heard if they don't have a vote.
- Staff will continue to hold open houses and meet with community stakeholders to ensure public voices are captured.

## Custer Drive/13th Avenue Station Name Change

Libby Winter, TriMet

Libby updated the CAC members on the renaming of Custer Drive Station, now changed to 13th Avenue Station. Through the CDR outreach process, community feedback indicated concerns that the name was insensitive, not inclusive, embodied white supremacy and overall did not align with community values. Adjacent stations names along Barbur are numerical, so using Custer is also inconsistent.

She briefly explained the process for selecting station names. TriMet works with partners and community members one year before service begins to select a station name focused on the objectives of orienting riders, supporting a sense of place, and aiding emergency responders to easily identify and find locations. Station naming conventions will be ongoing until 2026 and is mainly about making cross streets easily identifiable: clear and unique, and easy to remember and read. They work within a character limit and tend to incorporate significant locations and landmarks.

**Michael** commented he appreciated the name change from Custer to 13th Avenue.

**Bill** asked about community artwork along the corridor and whether it was in the scope for design.

**Libby** answered public art projects can no longer be included with federal funding but elected officials are pushing to have that removed because public art is a great way to create a sense of place and display community values. TriMet will do whatever is possible to work with partners to ensure stations are community-focused.

## CAC Evaluation Summary

Josh Mahar, TriMet

Josh summarized the recently completed evaluations. Things staff were rated as doing well included staff presentations, high quality materials and good facilitation of meetings. Things that need improvement included providing more time for feedback, having broader discussions and more opportunity to provide input for decision-making. The CAC members have not had many

discrete decision-making tasks. Josh stressed that the CAC members' insights and wisdom greatly help with project planning and design, even if the group doesn't make a formal recommendation.

Other comments included in the evaluation were: CAC members would appreciate receiving materials further in advance (Josh mentioned they will continue to strive for providing materials a week in advance per the CAC Charter) and the Tigard location was more preferred than Downtown Portland for meeting locations. For now, meetings will continue to occur virtually via Zoom. One comment did recommend a happy hour or a more informal tour for CAC members to meet and engage as a group. With COVID-19, it's poor timing for this, but hopefully sometime soon this will be possible.

## Round Table Discussion: Feedback and Engagement

Brandy Steffen, JLA

Brandy facilitated a round table discussion to hear from each CAC member, who were told they could pass if desired. Two questions were posed:

1. How can we better engage underrepresented groups in your community?
2. What topics or issues do you want to get more information about? Share more information about with your communities?

**Rebecca** appreciated the detail TriMet offers and the thorough points of coverage. The sense of community input has been great. She would like PCC students to be more a part of the process, but it has been difficult to do. In early 2021, she would like to collaborate and find ways to bring in more student input.

**Amanda** encouraged TriMet to continue outreach to LatinX communities and commented on the lack of public parking discussion at the Upper Boons Ferry Station. The Village Inn will be closing so this may present parking opportunities or other transit-oriented development potential.

**Scott** replied the Village Inn is closing and another fast food chain is interested in moving into the space so TriMet is continuing to consider what options are there (if transit-oriented development can happen). They'll be coordinating with the City of Tualatin on the best use of this land and will keep CAC members posted.

**Elise** commented she would not recommend that location for a drive through type restaurant because of the traffic congestion. It's difficult to consider putting in any more driveways there.

**Chris** commented he has been thoroughly impressed with what has been happening in this committee. He lives in Washington County, which has a very diverse population, so it will be important to make sure they encompass the diversity of the groups and the youth in the area. This includes construction, union and contractor groups.

**Michael** mentioned the OHSU community and reaching underrepresented communities there. Consider the right time of day to do outreach; it has been good so far. If this project could improve the Crossroads area, that would be a game changer.

**Ethan** said his community is excited about what's going on and noted that the Tigard area has a strong Vietnamese community and growing Native American community, so finding out how to reach out to these groups will be helpful to find out what their needs would be. He has continued concerns about the connection between Downtown Tigard and the Hall Boulevard Station. If there is an opportunity to save some money with the Village Inn location, he's interested what that would look like. Overall, he's happy with the amount of information and what's been shared.

**Melissa** mentioned she is glad there's been outreach to the Latinx community especially given the pandemic and she's curious about outreach updates with Somali populations. In general she's not sure what outreach has been done to reach people without internet and what opportunities exist for non-digital outreach. She's interested in hearing more about the West Portland Town Center work at the Barbur Transit Center, COVID and the economy, and COVID's impacts to the project. She would also like more information about the November transportation funding measure vote.

**Lindsey** commented her ideas are more pre-COVID, so she will have to think more about it. She is interested in hearing more about feedback comments on the conceptual design. In Tigard there was a meeting where people expressed concern about the Hall Boulevard Station. Transit-oriented development, affordable housing and the bus network are areas of interest.

**Rachael** asked about the trajectory of the CAC meetings and the next step as a group.

**Josh** replied there will be a break in July and the group is convened through December 2020. TriMet will likely form a new group in 2021 to deal with design topics and eventually construction.

**Rachael** continued there has been good engagement with residents. The pandemic is impacting the way we interact with other people and we are learning how to connect with folks who don't have access to internet and computers right now. She recently got a grant to get seniors tablets. Access to internet is a huge challenge. She's a fan of housing and will always be curious about that. Once the light rail gets going, she is curious about the process for making decisions and what those decisions look like in the midst of multiple, potentially conflicting goals.

**Bob** commented on the large Latinx community in Washington County and asked if Centro Cultural has been engaged.

**Josh** replied TriMet has used them for outreach pre-COVID and then things changed, so they transitioned to use TV Jam, which has great reach through online media. Conversations continue with Centro Cultural about future engagement partnerships.

**Bob** continued it will be important to consider transit access for disadvantaged people and the elderly (disabled).

**Bill** commented that an efficient, affordable, multimodal transit system will bring businesses, jobs and underrepresented groups together to create a vibrant commerce corridor where it's all interconnected with the neighborhoods. This will impact businesses and bring in jobs for underrepresented groups and help social and economic mobility. We should also minimize our dependency on vehicles. Safety is a critical factor. We should reexamine how we provide safety and security to the community. We are selling this to the greater community, and safety is always an issue. We need to consider how we can create a safe environment.

**Elise** stated she is interested in affordable housing topics and more discussion about how much will be developed along the corridor. The bus network will be redesigned as a result. She wants to make sure low-income neighborhoods are being well served by the bus network to get to the light rail. They should have input on this. She would also like to see more development with public-private partnership. She mentioned three outreach groups to tap into: Asian Reporter newspaper, El Hispanic newspaper and Mac G group.

**Calista** commented on the need to utilize the outreach already created with the SWEDS project. Also have a presence at transit centers, since those are the people who will continue to use it and have good feedback on it. This includes the Farmer's Market in Hillsboro and Tigard, and the PCC campus. She would also like to hear more about bicycle updates, as well as the evolution of how the stations will be built and the plans for Downtown Tigard. She is also interested in how affordable housing and transit-oriented development will fit in.

## Meeting Adjourn

Brandy Steffen, JLA

Brandy thanked the group and reminded everyone the next meeting will be Thursday, August 6, from 5:30-7:00 p.m., and will most likely be virtual depending on whether an in-person meeting is possible. Attendees were told they could send an email to [swcorridor@trimet.org](mailto:swcorridor@trimet.org) with any further questions or comments.

Josh mentioned there will be changes to the Conceptual Design Report (CDR) based on public feedback and continued work by partners in the community. TriMet will highlight what has changed in the report and hopes to present it to the CAC in August. TriMet staff stayed online for 15 minutes after the meeting ended to answer additional questions.