

Meeting minutes

Meeting: **82nd Avenue Transit Project Steering Committee #14**
 Date/time: Thursday, November 21, 2024 | 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
 Place: Hybrid meeting held via Zoom and in person at Metro Regional Center, MRC 328, 600 NE Grand, Portland, Oregon

Members, Alternates Attending

Kristin Hull, *alternate*
 Rian Windsheimer
 Councilor Christine Lewis, Co-chair
 Councilor Duncan Hwang, Co-chair
 JC Vannatta
 Vikki Payne, *alternate*
 Kaitlyn Dey
 Representative Khanh Pham
 Commissioner Mark Shull
 Michael Liu
 Zachary Lauritzen

Affiliation

City of Portland
 Oregon Department of Transportation
 Metro
 Metro
 TriMet
 Multnomah County
 Clackamas Service Center
 Oregon Legislature
 Clackamas County
 82nd Avenue Business Alliance
 Oregon Walks

Presenters

Melissa Ashbaugh
 Paulina Salgado
 Luis Velasco
 Jesse Stemmler

Metro
 TriMet
 Living Cully
 TriMet

Attendees

Dameion Samuelson
 Jacob Loeb
 Jennifer Koozer
 John Giacoppe
 Kiel Jenkins
 Mara Krinke
 Sandra Hikari
 Scott Bingham (Sundt)
 Sharon Daleo
 Jamie Snook
 Monica Krueger
 Zachary Powers
 Tanja Olson
 Jason Nolin
 Nubia Martinez

TriMet

 TriMet

 Parametrix
 Oregon Department of Transportation

 City of Portland
 TriMet
 Metro
 Cully Association of Neighbors
 Metro
 Metro
 Metro

Jeff Owen	Clackamas County
Peter Craig	KPFF
Jorge Sanchez Bautiste	
Myla Janssen	Metro
Michael Kiser	TriMet
Diego Murphy	Metro
Malu Wilkinson	Metro
Elizabeth Mros-O’Hara	Metro
Michaela Skiles	Metro
Kate Hawkins	Metro

Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Metro Councilor Lewis called the meeting to order at 2:37 p.m. and welcomed the attendees, reviewed general information for the meeting, and provided an overview of the agenda. This section does not have sound on the recording, so Councilor summarized the important parts and moved on with the agenda.

Approval of September 2024 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Lewis called for a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. Zachary made a motion and Michael Liu seconded it. Councilor Lewis asked for all in favor to say “Aye.” Minutes were approved with no opposition.

Updates from Partners

Councilor Lewis asked for introductions and updates from the members.

Co-chair Metro Councilor Lewis introduced herself.

Kristin Hull, City of Portland, sat in for Art Pearce. PBOT is going to their city council with the Building a Better 82nd Avenue Plan on December 4th, a culmination of Portland’s planning work on City of Portland portion of the corridor.

Rian Windsheimer, ODOT Region One manager, was happy to be working on this project and happy about the progress.

Zachary Lauritzen, Oregon Walks & 82nd Ave Coalition, shared that land across from McDaniel High School was recently purchased by Bird Alliance of Oregon, for trails, an animal hospital, and educational facilities which will bring energy to this section of the corridor. Zachary asked to share a report by the Coalition. After several meetings with partners, they have developed an equitable development strategy (EDS) to mitigate the pressures of displacement and potential negative effects of the transit and other major investment in the corridor. He noted that several projects happening simultaneously will increase values and rents. More investments are needed to prevent displacement. They have been working with Multnomah County to identify gaps in childcare and hope to give the workforce the skills to withstand rising values. The Coalition is asking the committee to review and support the Coalition’s efforts. A copy of the EDS was provided to each of the steering committee members in their materials.

Commissioner Mark Shull, Clackamas County, reported that the county has been working on Phase II of Sunrise Corridor and has an updated concept and maps.

Michael Liu, Fubonn, thanked Zach for his work on the EDS with the coalition.

Emerald Bogue, Port of Portland, still operates the airport and noted the opportunities to partner with

the coalition. Zach commended the airport on the new renovation.

Co-chair Metro Councilor Duncan Hwang introduced himself; he represents Metro District 6.

Kaitlyn Dey, Clackamas Service Center, opened a new building and they are settling in.

JC Vannatta introduced himself as Director of Public Affairs for TriMet and shared three updates: one, TriMet launched four more languages in Trip Planner. 2. They had a celebration of the Columbia bus bay facility that is linked to this project by providing infrastructure for future buses. 3. They celebrated the NOLO grant of \$39m from FTA [Federal Transit Administration]. He thanked Councilor Lewis for attending the celebration. In addition, TriMet is still hiring mechanics and drivers. Forbes ranked TriMet one of the top 5 places to work in Oregon.

Representative Khanh Pham had technical difficulties and dropped off the meeting.

Kelly Betteridge, Metro investment areas manager, gave an update: because of the election and change of administration might change the funding landscape. Metro and TriMet are working to position the project as best as possible, getting ready to move quickly when more information is available.

Vikki Payne, Multnomah County, sat in for Commissioner Brim-Edwards.

Public Comment

Councilor Lewis asked if there was anyone in the room that wished to make a public comment with a two-minute limit.

Zach Powers, board member for Cully Association of Neighbors, participated in TriMet's focus group, and spoke in support of the Cully terminus. He noted that they have heard a lot of positive feedback from neighbors. The area is improving over time and a lot of people who are transit dependent and support multi-modal options. The Cully area has been historically underserved and has a lot of dense income-restricted housing.

Paulina read a note from Annette Pronk, community development manager at Habitat for Humanity, an engaged Cully resident. About the Cully Terminus Engagement Group, Annette wrote that the process was thoughtful and transparent. She felt heard during the series of 5 meetings. There was a variety of lived experiences among the members. Relationships were made in the group by the safe and welcoming place that staff created. Annette wrote that she was skeptical at first but had a very positive experience and thanked the steering committee for the thoughtful engagement.

Councilor Lewis closed public comment when no hands were raised online.

Staff Northern Terminus Recommendation (Melissa Ashbaugh, Metro / Paulina Salgado, TriMet / Luis Velasco, Living Cully)

Councilor Hwang introduced Melissa Ashbaugh (Metro), Paulina Salgado (TriMet), and Luis Velasco (Living Cully). Melissa began with a review of the presentation's agenda: review of the evaluation criteria, updated recommendation, time for questions, and a temperature taking.

The evaluation criteria were developed by all the jurisdictional partners to reflect project goals and objectives, and support equity and decision-making. Last April the steering committee voted to narrow to two termini, Cully and Parkrose, because they performed the best across the categories. Staff felt that they needed more information to confirm one terminus, especially in terms of community fit and project feasibility.

Since April, there has been design work and the formation of a Technical Design Advisory Committee to support the process. They gathered information about traffic, safety, ridership, cost, compatibility with other plans, and community desires. Early project cost estimates for the project are \$315-320m with a

Cully terminus, and \$300-305m with a Parkrose terminus. The Cully terminus route is slightly longer, has more stations, and expects higher ridership. Both options expect 15-20% travel savings.

Paulina summarized the terminus engagement with community and neighborhood associations. In Parkrose, they focused on sharing information and confirming community priorities. From Parkrose they heard a need to upgrade to the transit center and address safety concerns.

In Cully, they focused on community fit. TriMet created the Cully Terminus Evaluation Group (CTEG) to gather feedback from a variety of stakeholders in the community. At a series of five meetings, the design team presented design concepts and gathered input. They incorporated feedback and brought new designs to the next meeting. In the end, they presented two design options, one on-street and one off-street that met the community needs to move forward, and the community group approved.

An Open House held on Sept. 30 was very successful with 80-90 people attending. The two design options that you see on the wall were displayed and attendees were given the opportunity to vote on their preferred location for the terminus. 75 out of 78 voted for Cully over Parkrose for the terminus. The community is excited about the improvements to the neighborhood. CTEG intentionally involved engaged community members and Luis Velasco is one of those members.

Luis Velasco, Living Cully, Program Manager, gave a personal account of the engagement in Cully. Luis gave kudos to staff for stipends to committee members, for removing barriers and supporting transportation justice. Staff gathered feedback, incorporated feedback, brought revisions to next meeting, and repeated the process. Cully has a track record of community-led initiatives, for example, Cully Park was converted from a landfill. Las Adelitas converted an adult entertainment center to 140 affordable housing units. Neighborhoods need affordable housing and parks to thrive. Cully is one of the largest, most diverse neighborhoods with the highest crime and poverty. Luis reported that it feels like this terminus will continue an improvement to the neighborhood, bringing reliable transportation. He noted that the Columbia Corridor has the highest pollution levels in the City of Portland due to the proximity to the airport. More transit options support reduced carbon consumption and emissions. This transportation investment is also an anti-displacement strategy. Many neighbors have already been displaced out of the neighborhood and this project will help those people to return. This project will draw people back into the neighborhood and give current residents more transportation mobility. Plus, there is room to develop. Cully wasn't incorporated until 1985, so many improvements are still needed, and the co-benefits of this project will reach beyond the neighborhood.

Melissa continued with the evaluation of the Cully terminus plan. The two plans presented fit within the community plans and physically fit. A Parkrose terminus assumes changes to the existing transit center to incorporate safety concerns but requires less changes for the community.

In terms of project feasibility, the Cully terminus has higher costs than Parkrose because of a longer alignment, but it has higher ridership projections. Both are competitive for federal funding, but Cully is more competitive because of higher ridership projections. Looking at the evaluation summary Cully outperforms Parkrose with the new analysis on almost all the categories.

Staff recommended the Cully triangle for the northern terminus. Melissa noted that in Cully there are other exciting opportunities and connections, a nexus between transit and land uses, and opportunities for affordable housing. Melissa addressed a question about lost transit connections in Parkrose with the Cully terminus and showed a graphic showing more connections to the Parkrose transit center than today with the project terminating in Cully.

Discussion

Councilor Hwang introduced time for discussion before a temperature taking exercise.

Commissioner Shull remarked that Clackamas County planning supports the Cully option, but shared a question from public: What weight was given to the fact that Parkrose has a direct connection to the MAX? In other words, how convenient is it to connect from MAX from Cully Terminus? Melissa stated that the exciting part is that the new line 72 will connect Cully and Parkrose and the MAX. Michael Kiser noted that the new BRT/FX line will also intersect directly with the MAX at I-84.

Senator-elect Pham posed a question about trade-offs. Were there any cuts made to the vision? For example, at Powell, originally there was going to be a renovation to improve throughput. She asked staff to talk more about the cuts that were made to the project, i.e., Powell intersection improvements due to scarce resources. Melissa responded that the preliminary costs that have been presented include all the core aspects for improved service and qualifying for FTA funding, but doesn't include intersection widening options, which are still being analyzed. They haven't been ruled out, but the core project is hitting the high mark in terms of competitiveness for federal grant funding.

Councilor Hwang wondered if staff would create alternative scenarios.

Michael Kiser responded that they are being intentional to create transparency for the BRT [bus rapid transit] essential items in FTA's framework, considering the needs of the city and community. Nothing has been taken off the table at this point. TriMet is drawing and costing for major intersection improvements at four key locations, including Powell. Some intersection improvements are anticipated to be quite expensive. That doesn't mean they aren't feasible, but it will depend on funding.

Councilor Hwang suggested that it is important for the members to understand the tradeoffs, costs, benefits, and possibilities. He guarded against designing to a set dollar amount and he wants to understand the full range of what is possible.

Michael Kiser noted that at the next steering committee meeting, staff will be closer to the 15% design milestone and will bring a cost estimate that includes aspirational pieces for long-term resiliency.

Zachary, Oregon Walks, flagged that closing the Killingsworth block was popular with many community members. He wondered about designing for that possibility in the future.

Jesse responded that they heard from the CTEG that they weren't interested in a pedestrian-only space on Cully. Many were worried about circulation. TriMet wants to be flexible and understand the future.

Kristin commended and appreciated the quality outreach effort. Cully is clearly the right terminus choice for transit riders and Portland is looking forward to making this terminus choice and addressing more hard choices in the future.

Senator-elect Pham has community organizing experience and cautioned against using "the" community because Cully is only one neighborhood among many in the corridor. She is nervous about making decisions that impact other communities because of limited funding. Most improvement in travel speed will come from signal prioritization, a powerful tool, but she will be disappointed if the project won't be able to create significantly better travel times and improve throughput of the bus. Senator-elect Pham asked about the criteria for BRT, specifically the speed requirements.

Melissa responded that BRT is a specific definition for federal funding that includes improving bus speeds through most intersections, new signage and bus stations, and we are meeting FTA's definition of BRT. Melissa will investigate the speed requirements and get back to Senator-elect Pham with details.

Councilor Hwang asked about the terminus designs shown on the wall. Is there a community preference at this point and what is the relationship with Hacienda CDC?

Jesse responded they have had conversations with Hacienda. The Cully community is interested in the off-street design. There are many conversations and negotiations to navigate because it will have higher

costs. The on-street opportunities, i.e., streetscape improvements, also resonated with community and doesn't prevent the off-street option in the future. Hacienda CDC and the community are excited about the opportunities for this space and lots of ideas were generated. TriMet's intent is to continue to interact with the community through this early design phase.

Northern Terminus Temperature Taking (Councilor Hwang)

Councilor Hwang introduced the temperature taking activity. This was not an official vote, but a chance to ask questions and air concerns. All steering committee members showed green, those who were present and visible at the time. Senator-elect Pham was not on screen at the time. The actual vote on the full LPA recommendation will be in January.

Updates on Cost/Scope (Michael Kiser, TriMet)

Michael Kiser, project director, presented an overview of the design and cost approach. Next month there will be a more robust layout on the design and cost. Right now, the design team is working hard on the next milestone, to build this project up, create transparency and break down assumptions. They start with core elements required for FTA Small Starts grant funding and are adding options beyond core elements, like intersection improvements, widening, and lane reallocation, to understand tradeoffs in design and costs. On large projects like this, after eliciting feedback from stakeholders, the wish list gets long and quickly goes over budget with aspirational pieces. The 15% milestone will be representative of the project with options.

82nd Ave has greater needs than the resources available. Fortunately, there are many projects happening at the same time from the City of Portland, ODOT, and Clackamas County. These are creating momentum and resources, and we are trying to do the most we can with a constrained budget. At the next meeting we will share a more extensive overview of all the work being done in the corridor.

At the next meeting we will also give a funding update: NOLO grant, partner contributions, PCEF grant, and other opportunities to fill in sidewalks. Fortunately, results of PCEF funding will be available by the next meeting. The larger piece, the federal CIG funding, will come later in the project, but we'll know more soon.

In February, staff will begin producing 30% design. Because it is a federally funded project, we must capture the full scope to do the NEPA analysis. Certainly, some items will be held for future projects. After that, we go to 60% design in 2025, and to 100% in 2027 before starting construction March 2027. In the spring we will bring in a contractor, which helps with design refinement and workforce development for a bigger impact on the community. At the next steering committee meeting we will have more on costs and funding.

Zachary asked about the PCEF application results by the December 19th steering committee meeting. Michael confirmed that the decision will come out on December 18th.

Michael Liu asked if the construction was going to happen during 9-5 day, or if there would be budget to organize work off-peak hours to minimize construction disruption to local businesses? Current construction is already having an impact and continuing construction for 5-6 years will be a significant impact.

Michael Kiser noted that construction will go from Spring of 27 to Summer of 29, only two years. He couldn't speak to work underway now, but the benefit of bringing on a contractor early is to reduce construction fatigue, working with the community, and creating a strategy for sequencing. We will figure out what makes the most sense and coordinate work at one place all at once to minimize the length of disruption. Night work is an option, but it is expensive and requires special permits. We are carrying a lot of contingency for construction to cover the unknowns.

Michael Liu noted the loss of revenue could be offset by the cost of off-peak construction hours. Everyone was affected by Covid, and the effects of the pandemic continue for the businesses on 82nd Ave. It is like death by a thousand paper cuts. It just keeps stacking up.

Kristin Hull offered construction contacts at the City of Portland for the current construction to Michael, and that they are coordinating with TriMet to reduce repeated disruption.

Michael Liu noted that the ripples of delay are great along the corridor, not just those businesses that are facing the construction. There is no way to avoid the disruption.

Senator-elect Pham asked for clarification on the funding because they were having trouble hearing. Michael Kiser responded that the funding from PCEF will be known by the next steering committee meeting. The federal grant amount would not be known until 2027. However, with the changing political climate, we are working to understand the best outcome for the project in a new administration.

Councilor Lewis asked Senator-elect Pham if they wanted to clarify their yellow card, which was communicated in the chat.

Senator-elect Pham wants to have more information which it sounds like it will come soon. She is advocating for the communities around Powell Blvd. Her concerns are not so much about the terminus, but only because of the cost estimate difference in the termini. We could either have better throughput at Powell or a Cully terminus. She is concerned about community frustration when people are stuck in traffic. If one improvement, like Cully, came at the cost of another, like Powell, then she would like to have that conversation with the committee.

JC commented that they are in the right place, but there is more to come. It's an iterative process and they are working with the community to understand the needs and there will be more opportunity for discussion. There will be more to come soon.

Next steps (Co-Chair Metro Councilor Lewis)

Melissa reported that the next step is to present the staff recommendation next month, so expect an agenda and materials to support that.

Councilor Hwang commended the project staff on the engagement in Cully and Parkrose. There was a round of applause.

Zachary noted that he was a green on Cully, but he is a yellow about lane allocation. He knows that lane allocation is outside the scope of the LPA, but he hears from the community all the time that lane allocation is what everyone wants to talk about. They want to know what the metrics are, how it gets decided, and what is the outreach plan? This will be important for the staff to clearly share with him and others.

Commissioner Shull noted that there is one thing that we haven't heard about in this ambitions plan. How will TriMet forecast their budget to sustain this project for operations and maintenance with new electrical and hydrogen charging?

Michael Kiser responded that TriMet is already working on the budget for the operations for the new vehicles and will be ready to handle the vehicles on 82nd. TriMet is working on workforce and an upgrade to the Powell garage to train employees. We must prove to the federal government that we can handle the operational costs.

Meeting adjourned at 4:06pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanja Olson, 82nd Avenue Steering Committee Recorder

Attachments to the Public Record, 82nd Avenue Steering Committee meeting, November 21, 2024

Item	DOCUMENT TYPE	DOCUMENT DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT No.
1	Agenda	11/14/2024	82 nd Avenue Transit Steering Committee Meeting Agenda November 21, 2024	1121202482ASC-01
2	Document	11/19/2024	82nd Avenue Transit Project Steering Committee September 2024 Draft Minutes	1121202482ASC-02
3	Document	11/14/2024	82nd Avenue Transit Project DRAFT route and terminus recommendation	1121202482ASC-03
4	Document	8/30/2022	Meeting protocols and proposed decision-making procedures	1121202482ASC-04
5	Document	11/26/2024	82nd Ave Coalition Equitable Development Strategies	1121202482ASC-05
6	Document	11/21/2024	Cully terminus conceptual design	1121202482ASC-06