

Multnomah County LIT Meeting 6: C2C/ 181st

Meeting: Metro Local Investment Team, Multnomah County

Date/time: August 8th, 2019, 5 pm to 7:30 pm

Place: Rosewood Initiative

Purpose: Tour corridor, review possible projects, & gather LIT feedback

Attendance

LIT Members

Tim Brunner

Maria Hernandez

Duncan Hwang

Thomas Ngo

Brian Wong

Staff

Kate Fagerholm, *Metro*

Andy Shaw, *Metro*

Camilla Dartnell, *Kittelson & Associates, Inc*

Jaye Cromwell, *JLA Public Involvement*

Brandy Steffen, *JLA Public Involvement*

General Public

Jay Higgins, *City of Gresham*

Inna Levin, *Metro*

Walter Robinson II, *Getting there Together Coalition*

Bob Stacey, *Metro Council*

Lori Stegman, *Multnomah County*

Joanna Valencia, *Multnomah County*

Summary of Discussion

This discussion focused on themes of safety for pedestrians and cyclists, equity, and accessibility. Many LIT members stated their priority to focus on projects that addressed current needs of safety, equity, and mobility for people in the community over regional connectivity projects. The discussion also outlined several specific sites on the corridor where safety could be improved.

Meeting

The meeting started with a brief presentation on the C2C/181st Avenue Corridor, led by Camilla Dartnell, (Kittelson and Associates). LIT members and the general public then participated on the bus tour of 162nd Avenue, led by Andy Shaw (Metro). After the tour LIT members then had a discussion on these projects, facilitated by Brandy Steffen (JLA Public Involvement).

Presentation

The following elements were presented regarding C2C/ 181st Avenue:

- Regionally, this corridor is a North-South connection between Happy Valley and the Columbia Corridor (through Gresham), and connects to other major regional corridors, connects employment areas with services, housing, parks and schools, and could support the future Rock Creek employment area.
- Locally, this corridor serves both Multnomah and Clackamas Counties. For Multnomah County, it serves the Rockwood community, provides key links for TriMet transit lines, and serves various residential, commercial and employment developments.
- The part of this corridor in Multnomah County has had a number of safety issues, including three fatalities and 39 serious injuries.
- Regional Transportation Plan projects include:
 - 172nd/190th Connector
 - Complete 172nd Ave and 190th Ave to five lanes with bicycle lanes and sidewalks
 - Complete buildout with boulevard from
 - Glisan St. to Yamhill St.
 - Add southbound lane from I-84 to Sandy Blvd
 - MAX Station projects
 - Add turn lanes at Powell Blvd intersection
- Current local opportunities include:
 - Modify 172nd Ave. to urban standards (estimated cost at \$35-40 million)
 - Modify 190th Ave. to urban standards from 11th St to Cheldelin Rd. (estimated cost at \$50-60 million)
 - Pleasant View Bridge replacement (estimated cost at \$2-3 million)
 - Incorporate Enhanced Transit Corridor options at key locations
 - Provide consistent lighting along the corridor, especially at intersections and crossings
 - Additional enhanced crossings for pedestrians, especially at transit stops
 - Fill sidewalk gaps
 - Fill bicycle lane gaps, and restripe bicycle lanes to be buffered or physically separated

Tour

The group attended a 60-minute tour of the corridor. LIT members, as well as elected officials and the general public were able to ask questions about the corridor and associated projects planned for the area. No notes were taken during this part of the meeting and discussion was encouraged for the following group discussion.

Group Discussion

The group reassembled after the tour to discuss what they had seen, as well as review additional information from the technical team. Below is a bulleted summary of comments and questions raised by LIT members, followed by responses of the technical team. Responses from Metro or Kittelson are shown as a sub-bullet.

Common themes of the discussion were: safety issues along the corridor, equity concerns, enhancing accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.

Safety

LIT members discussed the need for safety considerations for future projects. The key points were:

- Some LIT members expressed concern in modifications to ‘urban standards,’ and felt that there might not be consistency across the region on these standards.
 - Andy (Metro) clarified that Metro has specific guidance on urban standards across the region.
- Some felt that restriping bicycle lanes with only paint was not adequate. This does not help to increase a feeling of safety, especially when vehicles are moving at high speeds. Increasing a sense of safety will help people choose to ride bicycles on this corridor.
- The signal and intersection at 181st (turning into 182nd) is confusing for both cars and pedestrians, and a potential project could be to make this clearer.
- Several LIT members expressed the need to better understand the economic development aspects in this corridor, and to focus more on better pedestrian safety and standards where there is higher density.
- Many LIT members stated specifically that they want to prioritize immediate safety needs of residents in this community before addressing the connector issue. They felt that this was an immediate, near term need, as opposed to long term projects.
- Several LIT members addressed the need for crossings at schools located in this corridor.

Equity

LIT members were especially interested in equity concerns in areas under consideration for projects. The key points discussed were:

- Many members were concerned about the scale versus cost of this project. Some felt that projects proposed on this corridor came at a much higher cost, especially in comparison to other corridors. Some expressed difficulty in seeing the tradeoffs of safety and resiliency versus economic development as an entire region.
- Members generally want to see safety and equity prioritized first with a specific focus on livability for people who have been continuously disenfranchised.

- Several members expressed deep concern about displacement and gentrification, specifically that land acquisition and improvement projects in this area would cause further gentrification. Anti-displacement strategies will need to be a key component of improvements in this area.
- One LIT member expressed alarm in reading the survey comments and responses; the demographics of the survey respondents is not representative of the neighborhoods in which the projects will take place.
- One member questioned who would be the primary beneficiary of the connector projects and if would truly serve the local community in the area of the project.
- Some felt that if this corridor would primarily serve as a throughway to Gresham, the need for investment was less critical than in areas with nearby housing and potential for residential growth.
- Some felt strongly that the perspectives of the diverse communities in the Rockwood area should be directly engaged. They noted that there are over 60 languages spoken in Rockwood, and noted a need to balance current needs and growth, and plan for the resiliency of the people who will be there.
- Some felt that the proximity of farmland in this area was valuable, especially considering the resiliency of the region.

Accessibility

Members discussed how enhancing accessibility along this corridor should be a critical component to future projects. The key points were:

- One member felt that there is a clear need to provide public service through a bus route or shuttle buses, and it needs to leverage regional investment. They felt that this C2C connection project provides no benefit for communities that live in Rockwood.
 - *This project is all about making connections to the region. Connecting the north and south to better job opportunity. This is a big corridor with lots of different characteristics. The whole thing needs to function together and there is no other corridor that connects the whole distance (Jay, City of Gresham).*
- Many members expressed the desire to see TriMet commit to putting bus service on this roadway, to help serve the needs of those living with low incomes.

Comments on the Process

Some of the discussion focused on dissatisfaction with the LIT process. The key points were:

- Frustration on the short response time for feedback, and the difficult in getting information ahead of meetings.
- Uncertainly that the feedback being given is meaningful.
- A desire to review final reports and see the documentation of feedback before it advances to the Task Force or the Metro Council.

Additional Comments

One LIT member responded after the meeting with additional written comments:

- I feel the main purpose of this committee is to promote pedestrian, bicycle, bus (and any form other than motor/electric vehicles), plus there is zero discussion about freight

mobility. It is extremely short sighted of whomever is above us to set the goals as such, but in a METRO area that is growing as rapidly as ours, the actual reduction of vehicle lanes, slowing down traffic as a way of making it "safe," is silly. It is not logical. The fact is the majority of our community drives a car (whether gas, diesel or electric). Most of the efforts (and resources) are devoted to the 3% (other modes of transportation than cars and trucks). Ironically this 3% is constructed with revenue generated partly/mostly from gas tax. So the goal of METRO, Portland is to force people from their cars to other forms out of necessity. I think this is a disservice to the 97% of our community (probably slightly less of a percentage), that utilize a personal vehicle for travel around the community.