



Land Use and Transportation Committee
Wednesday, September 24, 2014, 7:00pm–8:30pm
Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods Office
4815 NE 7th Avenue, Portland, OR
Minutes

Meeting Attendees

Committee Members

Anjala Ehelebe, Woodlawn
Garlynn Woodsong, Concordia
Madison Weakley, At-Large
Mitchell Snyder, Vernon
Jim Brown, Alameda
Andy Sheie, At-Large

Rachel Lee, NECN Board, Sabin LU Chair
Dan Marchand, TriMet
Kate Lyman, TriMet
Clay Thompson, TriMet
Nan Stark, BPS District Liaison
Claire Adamsick, NECN Staff
Katy Asher, NECN Staff

Additional Participants

Margo Dobbertin, NECN Board, King Neighbor
Jim Howell, Eliot Neighbor

Meeting called to order 7:03 p.m.

TriMet's North Central Service Enhancement Plan in N/NE Portland

Kate Lyman, Dan Marchand and Clay Thompson from TriMet's Policy/Planning and Outreach divisions were present to answer community questions and respond to feedback that NECN previously submitted regarding TriMet service needs in the coalition area. Kate shared a map of existing bus routes in the NECN Area, along with ridership (boardings) information for Line 17 and 77 as requested by some committee members.

TriMet is taking a comprehensive look at bus routes for the first time in about 30 years, where the routes go and how frequently they run. In this process, TriMet is also paying close attention to the City's work on the Comprehensive Plan.

TriMet Service Updates: additional trips on lines 44 and 4 to relieve overcrowding, along with more weekday evening service on lines 6, 8, 72 and 75. TriMet will be making changes to Line 72 in December to increase reliability. They are also replacing older buses at a more rapid rate to increase accessibility for people with mobility challenges, and are repairing infrastructure on the MAX blue line.

The North Central Service Enhancement Plan is meant to address demographic changes, growth and needs of vulnerable populations across the entire service district. The current engagement phase will last through the winter, with a plan presentation and additional public comment period in early 2015. TriMet hopes to finalize the plan in 2015.

TriMet wants public input on the following questions: whether people want to walk or bike to stations safely; which lines need improved frequency; whether busses should run earlier or later than they do; and how to make connections and routes better.

They are asking these questions via their website TriMet.org/future and via their survey TriMet.org/future/survey through Oct 24. They're also attending community events and conducting stakeholder interviews with community-based organizations.

NECN staff polled the land use committee members and land use leaders at neighborhood associations on these questions, and Kate had a chance to review these comments prior to the meeting.

One comment was to split Line 72 into two routes because it often gets off schedule or bunches together when it travels along 82nd Avenue. Garlynn shares that Concordia's comments on the 72 have to do with bringing the bus back to on-schedule, and to better connect Concordia to the airport. Concordia is also interested in moving the 72's service to Killingsworth to allow for frequent service to downtown from Alberta Street.

Dan Marchand shares about some challenges TriMet has seen with the line, with the high ridership on 82nd, as well as splitting the route and sending some of the busses back along the route in Cully. Jim from Eliot acknowledges Garlynn's points and adds a request for better access to Cascade Station as well as an E/W route along Prescott.

Jim Brown asks TriMet to discuss Line 24. TriMet has heard ideas about extending it to the Rose Quarter or across the Fremont Bridge, as well as around addressing the frequency. Jim Brown asks TriMet to address how late the 24 runs, because there's not a lot of evening service in the Alameda area. Rachel discusses how it was helpful to have Line 24 connect with the Rose Quarter during a previous time period. Jim Howell also wants TriMet to consider that lines should run in both directions so that someone doesn't go in one direction and get stuck with no transfer options.

Garlynn asks a question in relation to Line 17: if this line were to provide ridership to provide service along Alberta, Williams and to downtown, how many people would lose access – particularly in regard to the area between 12th and 24th? Jim Howell suggests that instead of terminating the line in the 30s, it could go west to Swan Island. He advocates for frequent service along a multi-destination grid.

Garlynn suggests that the request for frequent service along Alberta down Williams to downtown reflected the neighbors' interests in reducing travel time from Alberta to downtown, which currently takes about 30 minutes.

Dan says this isn't the first time he's heard community feedback in favor of keeping the 72 on Killingsworth – why? Garlynn says people like the idea of staying on Killingsworth travel is generally faster and the turns would be less tight. He also mentions the developing node at 15th and Killingsworth and the existing node at 30th as places with increasing density.

Margo suggests an express route in the area from NE to downtown. TriMet says that express routes haven't been that effective, primarily because they get stuck behind the other busses. They also hear complaints from people who don't understand why the express isn't stopping for them. People will use express busses when they're available, however. Margo points out that the County building at Killingsworth and MLK provides a lot of services to people who need transit.

Kate addresses the connection of line 6 and 8 in Woodlawn. Clay Thompson says he will provide an update for layover location for Line 8 in the Woodlawn neighborhood next week. The layover location may address the connection question.

Kate addresses NECN's stated desire for a MAX station at 33rd and Broadway, acknowledging that the freeway to the south and the train station to the north would make for costly construction. TriMet is not sure whether the cost-benefit would pencil out. They wonder whether better bus service along Broadway and Weidler would be more cost-effective. Jim Howell likes the idea of making the 72 and 77 frequent service. Claire shares a Grant Park perspective (via notes from a previous meeting on this topic) of interest in having a drop-off area for riders at the Hollywood Transit Center. Garlynn adds to the point that

it's really difficult to drop off a rider at that stop on either side of Halsey. In regard to the Hollywood Transit Center, Jim Howell talks about how it is difficult to get up and over the stairs. He suggests remodeling the center so that you can walk from the bus turnaround area straight to the platform. Discussion of whether the roundabout could be eliminated, and allow the buses to just pass through.

Anjala suggests that shuttles from 33rd and Broadway to Hollywood Transit Center might be the most cost-effective way to address this challenge.

Garlynn wants to know why the 77 doesn't go downtown. Why not keep the old route 17 through NE Portland? The 77 historically serviced NE to Montgomery Park, but Dan isn't sure why this line does not follow the old streetcar routes. Clay says the 17 used to go through NE Portland, but it changed in 2012 due to budget restrictions. Kate can get more information for Garlynn about the changes the 17 went through over time.

Margo addresses gentrification in King, and wonders what we can do to encourage ridership among new residents. Kate talks about TriMet's efforts to increase the quality of transit overall. TriMet has automatic passenger counters to know how many people get on and off at different places, but they aren't sure how to tell why people are getting on or off at a certain place. TriMet also looks at where the jobs are tries to address routes, but sometimes those routes are to the suburbs and can take a couple of hours to reach.

The survey (trimet.org/future/survey) was designed to seek brief input. Neighbors with more detailed information should contact TriMet directly. Garlynn says that Concordia's Land Use and Transportation Committee would like to invite TriMet to its October meeting; TriMet is available to attend other neighborhood association meetings upon request.

Comprehensive Plan: NECN/neighborhood feedback

Nan Stark, BPS District Liaison for NECN, reports that Comp Plan hearings are underway and the public comment period is open until November 4th, which is the last day to give any kind of testimony, spoken or written. The next Planning and Sustainability Commission hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14th at Parkrose Highschool; another is set for Tuesday, October 28th at PCC's SE campus. The final hearing is on Tuesday, November 4th at BPS.

Nan is available to come talk to neighborhood associations except between the 2nd and 10th of October. Anjala reports that a Woodlawn neighbor was excited about the Map App, but wondered whether individual comments will lead to any changes, and whether it is worthwhile for individuals to go to hearings. Nan says that the proposed changes on the map don't constitute a big shift in regard to Comp Plan map designations. What BPS has now won't be changed a great deal. What **will** change dramatically is how the City is expected to grow. The growth will be reflected in changes along corridors. It is helpful for people to weigh in on what kind of scale they're willing to live with. For example, will more 6 story buildings be acceptable along corridors (such as Vancouver/Williams)?

Jim Brown shares concern about what gets built in residential areas. Is anyone talking about context compatibility or solar access? Nan reports that it didn't come up at the most recent hearing. Jim is interested in scale compatibility. Garlynn says that Concordia has talked about this for months, referencing a study in San Diego which is looking at limits based upon width and height in relation to adjacent properties. Concordia's land use committee is interested in context compatibility along with some kind of ability for neighbors to appeal when that isn't the case with a new development proposal.

Katy reports that her neighborhood (Arbor Lodge) is exploring a health overlay in regards to building height.

Garlynn presents the idea of having single-family zones, where people are allowed to develop multiple dwelling units. The restrictions would be focused on height, setback and coverage area of the yard. With all of the demolitions currently taking place, affordable single family housing is being bulldozed for more expensive, single-family housing. If a single structure with multiple dwelling units (MDUs) was allowed on a lot, maybe it would allow for more affordable housing.

Concordia's board and its land use committee have discussed this idea at several meetings, and the idea seems to have general support. Garlynn asks for input from the group. Rachel expresses concern about whether it would become even more profitable for the developers because they could sell several units. She doesn't think it would help preserve some of the historic homes, and wonders whether it would incentivize additional demolitions.

Garlynn suggests that Concordia thinks the economics of this plan will still support demolitions, regardless of how many units you can build. In addition to this plan, could you put a cap on how many structures can be demolished on a block, for example, 20%? Rachel and Jim express concern that that would lead to a race to demolish. Garlynn is interested in seeing this concept in the transit zones, for example.

Jim Brown says that Alameda discussed whether they could see a limit on demolitions in some form, and would be willing to go door to door to gather input. Anjala shares ways in which Woodlawn has allowed variances in density along transit zones, and has experienced TriMet eliminating service in those areas. Jim Howell suggests a compromise allowing the large houses to be subdivided into condominiums. Garlynn emphasizes the idea of keeping the setback and the single-family feel. Nan thinks that would effectively turn single-family zones into multi-family zones without stating it. Further discussion ensued around the intersection between design and density.

In terms of Comp Plan input, Nan states that letters from associations or coalitions will likely have more weight as written testimony (vs. individual comments) and acknowledges that the desire to retain affordable housing and fight displacement is being heard by the City.

Garlynn moves to recommend that in single-family zones designated "R5" and above, potentially as an overlay in transit zones, that "flats," or multiple dwelling units, be allowed. Anjala seconds the motion. Mitch notes that the setback issue is currently a barrier in Vernon neighborhood. It is difficult to get into ADUs with the setback requirements. In a vote, two committee members were in favor, four were opposed. Motion does not pass.

Committee members expressed interest in seeing a more ironed-out proposal from Garlynn to review for discussion at the October 22 LUTC meeting. For NECN Board referral, the LUTC could bring a letter to the NECN Executive Committee meeting on Monday, November 3rd. The Comp Plan public comment period closes on Tuesday, November 4th (the date of the last scheduled Planning and Sustainability Commission hearing).

Approval of August Minutes

In the absence of a quorum (after Madison's departure from the meeting), Claire postpones minute approval to October.



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Demolition “Summit” debrief and next steps

- Claire shares about opportunities to attend neighborhood meetings regarding demolitions, and specific proposals that may go forward to City Council.
- She also announces an opportunity to talk with Claire Carder, Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) member at October 22 meeting; the group is in favor.

Subcommittee/Advisory Committee Updates

- Transportation Subcommittee – No meeting in September
- Parks: Correspondence with Commissioner Fritz re: Grant Park
Claire will invite Ken to discuss at future meeting
- Claire announces openings available for Committee Chair and Co-Chair positions.
- PBOT BAC vacancy – talk to Claire if interested in serving.

Neighborhood Updates

Jim Howell asks the group to consider changes to two bus lines; will share PowerPoint with Claire to distribute to interested committee members.

Announcements:

ABCs of Land Use workshop scheduled: Saturday, October 18, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., NECN Office

Meeting adjourned 8:55p.m.

Next meeting: October 22nd, 7:00 p.m.

