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# The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

Candlelight vigil  
honors New Yorker  
killed on  
Barbur Boulevard  
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Volume No. 19, Issue No. 3

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Portland, Oregon

Complimentary

January 2011

## Wilson Area Arts Council rings in the holiday season

By Polina Olsen  
The Southwest Portland Post

The weather outside was frightful but the crowd didn't care as they gathered around the carolers outside Food Front Cooperative Grocery in Hillsdale on December 5.

Accompanied by music teacher, Jeanne Berg, Panache, Robert Gray Middle School's advanced choir, entertained as spectators warmed up with designer hot chili complements of Food Front and their culinary-gifted employees.

Meanwhile, others kept busy insuring events like this keep on keeping-on. Today kicked-off the Wilson Area Arts Council Instrument Drive.

The program will make participation in school music programs easy for kids whose families might not otherwise afford them. Do you have an orchestra or band instrument gathering dust in your closet? It could be time to find it the perfect new home.

The WAAC provides grants to Southwest Portland public schools, explained Lisa Broten who set up a fundraising booth at the nearby Hill-

sdale Farmer's Market.

"We help the schools with exposure to the arts by being available and donating funds. We give grants as they are needed. So, a teacher can write in and say, 'I need help with our sixth grade class art project.' The drama club at Gray asked for a grant to help fund the play Dracula."

Like so many non-profits, the WAAC relies on donations and clever fundraising events. "We collected 600 purses over two months for a fundraiser at O'Connors" Broten said remembering the successful In the Bag: Benefit for the Arts that ran in mid-November.

Even celebrities like Storm Large, Joan Rivers, and Jean Auel donated purses. The WAAC distributed the \$4500 they raised to the Wilson High School choir, orchestra, band and musical theater.

Broten emphasized local business support. "Multnomah vendors provided gift certificates for In-the-Bag," she said. "Paloma Clothing always donates money." Food Front and the Hillsdale Farmer's Market are helping the instrument drive by providing

(Continued on Page 3)



Lisa Broten (tuba), Raichle Dunkeid and Nicola Bachman collect donations for school band instruments. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

## Capitol Highway project planning complete, except for funding

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

The Capitol Highway improvement project is essentially complete.

In December a Citizen Advisory Committee unanimously approved a program of improvements designed to provide better and safer car, bike and pedestrian movement along Southwest Capitol Highway between

Multnomah Boulevard and Taylors Ferry Road.

Now all that is needed is the money to make it all real.

The most recent design calls for one 11-foot and one 12-foot travel lane for cars, a six-foot bike lane on each side, two six-foot pedestrian paths, and two 4.5-foot "stormwater furnishing zones" with trees and other vegetation.

On most of the roadway the pedestrian paths will be inside the furnishing zone, the bike paths outside of it. On significant upgrades – mostly on the southbound side of the road – the bikes will be inside the furnishing zone separated from the pedestrian paths by a three-inch curb.

In some places this scheme will be modified to deal with local conditions. A late addition to the plan is to provide more open asphalt at all intersections to provide more visibility.

Committee members had expressed concern about auto, bike and pedestrian conflicts due to this issue. An earlier proposal to have bikes share the right of way with either cars or pedestrians at certain points was dropped.

CAC members endorsed the plan, but agreed with Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Transportation Committee chair Marianne Fitzgerald: "It's absolutely critical that this be funded and built, not just sit on a shelf. This is our highest priority."

CAC member Jim McLaughlin agreed, and complained about the amount of money needed to build the furnishing zones. The projected cost of the project is \$19.1 million, up from an earlier \$12 million.

Part of the cost increase is based on the need for sewer improvements (\$3

million) and "off-site enhancements" to handle the added stormwater runoff (\$2 million).

City experts found that local soils have an unusually poor capacity to absorb water, necessitating other ways to deal with runoff.

City officials had previously earmarked \$2 million from local construction System Development Charges for the project, and were seeking 10 million in federal transit funds. There is no strategy yet for raising the remaining \$7.1 million.

However, Project Manager Ross Swanson of the Portland Bureau of Transportation told the Post that, contrary to rumor, a Local Improvement District assessment of adjacent property owners was "not on the table at this time."

Another CAC member, Roger Averbek, said he looked forward to a related project: the redesign of the I-5-Capitol Highway-Barbur Boulevard interchange on the south end of the Capitol Highway project.

Swanson said it is possible to do this, but warned that it would cost millions of dollars. A new multi-phase traffic signal, a key element of such a venture, alone would cost \$500,000, he said.

About 90 people attended a final open house on the project last month. Aside from local concerns, most echoed the need to implement the project, and do it soon.

Swanson said that although a City Council review of the project is not specifically required by regulations, "It's inconceivable that this won't go to Council." No date for such a hearing had been set as *The Post* went to press, but it will probably occur this spring.



Capitol Highway street plan illustration - Capitol Highway and Lobelia facing North. (Courtesy Portland Bureau of Transportation)

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The Southwest Portland Post  
4207 SE Woodstock Blvd #509  
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# Candlelight vigil honors New Yorker killed on Barbur Boulevard

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Don Snedecor  
The Southwest Portland Post

On Wednesday, December 15, at about 10:47 p.m. Angela Burke, a 26-year-old woman from New York, was struck and killed by a motorist while walking her bicycle across Southwest Barbur Blvd just south of Hamilton Street. She had lived in Portland just four months.

Caleb Pruitt, who was driving his 2008 Subaru Impreza at a high rate of speed when he allegedly struck and killed Burke, was arrested on allegations of negligent homicide and driving under the influence of intoxicants.

A passenger riding with Pruitt was taken to a nearby hospital with non-life threatening injuries. Pruitt has since been released on bail.

On Monday, December 20 at about 5:30 p.m., some 50 people showed up for a candlelight vigil at the place where Burke was killed. Maybe you know the place, the turnout south of Hamilton Street where they often sell Christmas trees at this time of year.

Some came on foot, some by car, but many came by bicycle, wearing reflective gear, and holding signs, and flashlights and candles in this woman's memory. A number of transportation advocates were in attendance at the vigil.

I saw Don Baack, chair of SW Trails there. So was Marianne Fitzgerald, chair of the Southwest Transportation Committee. Maria Cahill, secretary of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, rode her bike. So did her husband.

"SW Trails, the SWNI Transportation Committee and others have been working to improve safety along the length of Barbur Boulevard, but little has been done," said Baack. "Especially on the Barbur bridges, the narrowest and most uncomfortable sections of Southwest Barbur Boulevard for bicyclists and pedestrians."

I spoke to Mark Lear of the Portland Bureau of Transportation who attended the candlelight vigil. He introduced me to a woman he was speaking to from the Oregon Department of Transportation, the agency in charge Highway 99W/Barbur Boulevard.

I asked Lear why couldn't they install a traffic signal somewhere near where Burke was killed?

Lear said while he thought a signal was a good idea, he thought it should be closer to the Rasmussen Apartments, approximately .75 miles south of the Hamilton signal. That's where the TriMet bus stop is located. According to Google Maps, the next traffic signal south is 1.6 miles away, at Miles Street.

So for now, between Hamilton and Miles Street, you're literally taking your life in your hands if you need to cross the five lanes of

traffic. This isn't right and something needs to change.

Steph Routh, director of the Willamette Pedestrian Coalition, said, "Ms. Burke's death was as senseless as it was preventable. In our community and in our region, everyone should feel safe while walking or biking on our roads. There is no higher priority than preserving life. This tragedy is a mournful reminder of how far we have to go in terms of traffic safety."

I stand with all these transporta-

tion advocates in the candlelight wondering why this had to happen. With some thoughtful planning, perhaps future tragedies could be prevented?

We mourn the loss of Angela Burke and extend our sincere condolences to her friends and family. We cannot imagine their loss.

Police are continuing to investigate this incident. Anyone with additional information is urged to call Traffic Officer Barry Busse of the Portland Police Bureau at 503-823-2216.




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## Despite concerns about Tryon Creek, Portland Plan moves forward

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

There are no rezoning proposals on the table, but the Portland Plan is moving forward.

The Plan will update the 1980 Portland Comprehensive Plan and set policy, zoning and other regulations that will guide public projects and private development.

As part of the effort, the City is considering some 20 background reports on subjects such as transportation, housing and economic development, and the Buildable Lands Analysis.

The latter is an inventory designed to show the location of lands that are either empty or occupied by uses well below the level of activity allowed by the zoning.

An overlay then shows where there are "constraints" such as regulations, geologic issues or lack of infrastructure that would interfere with the build-out of these lands.

In recent presentations to the Portland Planning Commission, planner Eric Engstrom said that the City doesn't necessarily view the "constraints" as bad or something that needs to be eliminated, nor is the Analysis a policy decision that would dictate anything else. However, it would be an important influence on actual decisions further on in the process.

For that reason, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. land use chair John Gibbon asked the Commission to delay their adoption of the Analysis, and other background material, last month in order to give neighborhood volunteers more time to react to it.

He noted that an analysis of the possible build-out of land in the Tryon Creek Basin had jumped suddenly from zero units to 1300. "I know the city is trying to increase the supply of single-family housing, but we're trying to re-establish fisheries here," Gibbon said. "That big of a numbers change makes me a lot less comfortable."

Gibbon also noted that developers are

continuing to build in known landslide areas. Engstrom later said that change was due to an initial technical error, and that the higher number (1300 units) still left the Tryon Creek Basin with a very low projected development potential.

Engstrom conceded that in an effort to reach a broader public audience, "we haven't had as much contact with traditional neighborhood groups as we normally do."

Despite Gibbon's objections, the Commission chose to pass the Analysis, with the observation that neighborhood groups and others will still have time to give input before the document goes to City Council.

Engstrom reported that even if all "constraints" remain as they are, the City has the capacity to meet goals for the development of new housing.

It is deficient, however, in the amount of land desired for industrial development. The City is depending on the expansion of health and education facilities for a significant portion of job growth, and both are located in campuses adjacent to residential neighborhoods, a source of friction when the institutions try to expand.

Other findings included that 60 percent of the city's housing stock is single family, but 60 percent of what has been built in the last ten years is multi-family (including condominiums.)

The city of Portland has 40 percent of the region's jobs (which Bureau of Planning and Sustainability director Susan Anderson is unusually high among American cities today), but has captured just 11 percent of recent job growth.

*The last two in a series of five lectures related to Portland Plan sub-topics will be held this month. On January 10 from 7 to 9 p.m., Cynthia Girling and Ronald Kellett of the University of British Columbia School of Architecture will lead a discussion on "Design for Environment and Community" at the Multnomah Arts Center, 7688 S.W. Capitol Hwy. On January 17 from 7 to 9 p.m. Bob Weissbourd will discuss Economic Development at Mercy Corps, 28 S.W. First Ave.*

## WAAC Rings in Holiday Season

(Continued from Page 1)

a drop-off location and free fundraising space.

"We want to give instruments to the schools so when someone wants to play and they can't afford it, it's theirs," Broten said, explaining the reason WAAC's new drive is important.

According to Broten, "Kids often can't afford instruments and are too embarrassed to ask for help." The group also hopes spare instruments will be available when needed.

"We had one little girl who had nothing to play when her clarinet broke," said Broten. "And, we have only one instrument repairer. We would also like to give a grant for repairing instruments."

All instruments in any state of repair are needed. Baritone saxophones, oboes, double French horns, and bassoons are particularly sought after.

Drop off the instruments at Food Front Cooperative Grocery, 6344 SW Capitol Hwy, 503-546-6559 during regular business hours. Be sure to leave your name and address if you would like WAAC to send a receipt. Call Lisa Broten at 503-293-0903 for instrument pickup. To receive WAAC's free newsletter visit [www.wilsonarts.org](http://www.wilsonarts.org) and select email list sign-up.



Music teacher Jeanne Berg leads the Robert Gray Middle School Panache singing group outside Food Front Grocery on December 5. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

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Please mark your calendar and plan on joining us on Tuesday, January 11th anytime between 6:30 and 8:30pm to learn more about a project to provide sidewalks, stormwater management, and improved bicycle facilities on SW Multnomah Blvd between 21st and 31st Ave.

Staff from the Portland Bureau of Transportation and the Bureau of Environmental Services will be on hand to present background information and design options for public review and comment.

This project provides a great opportunity to improve pedestrian connections between SW Barbur Blvd and Multnomah Village, in addition to improving safety for both

pedestrians and bicycles. Current funding should allow for improvements on the north side of Multnomah Blvd between SW 21st and 31st Ave. in conjunction with the Bureau of Environmental Services sewer main project. The project also intends to develop a design concept for the entire corridor up through Multnomah Village to SW 40th Ave for future construction phases.

**Tuesday, January 11, 2011**

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For more information please contact:  
**Rich Newlands, Project Manager, (503) 823-7780**  
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# EARTH TALK



Questions & Answers  
About Our Environment

**Dear EarthTalk: Why did 34 million wild sockeye salmon return to the Fraser River in British Columbia this year? The run had been declining for 20 years before now.**

— David B., Seattle, WA

The miraculous sockeye salmon run in western Canada's Fraser River watershed in the summer and fall of 2010—indeed the biggest run in 97 years—still has fishers, researchers and fishery managers baffled. Just a year earlier only one million fish returned to spawn.

No one seems to be able to say for sure what caused the massive 2010 run, but most agree that it probably had to do with the very favorable water conditions that were present in 2008 when the sockeyes were juveniles.

"They're very vulnerable at that stage of their life," reports John Reynolds, a salmon conservation expert at Canada's Simon Fraser University.

Roberta Hamme, a researcher with Canada's University of Victoria, suggests in a recent study published in *Geophysical Research Letters* that the

ash fall from the eruption of Alaska's Kasatochi volcano in 2008 may be one reason for the huge 2010 run.

Iron in the ash, which was spewed far and wide by the erupting volcano and then dispersed further by turbulent weather, served as a fertilizer throughout the North Pacific.

The result was huge algae blooms that dramatically improved the fish's food supply. A similar large Fraser River salmon run in 1958 was likewise preceded by a huge volcanic eruption in Alaska.

What was particularly striking about 2010's mammoth run was the contrast against 2009, when the Fraser River sockeye run was a disaster by all accounts.

It capped 20 years of decline and was so much worse than anyone had expected that the Canadian government formed a commission to investigate possible causes, reported Daniel Jack Chasan on the Pacific Northwest news website, *Crosscut*.

The situation was terrible in 2008, as well, so much so that on the U.S. side of the border, then-Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez declared the Fraser salmon fishery a disaster and allocated \$2 million to U.S. tribes and commercial fishermen to make up for their loss of income.

But strangely enough, just as the Canadian commission began investigating the paltry 2009 run, said Chasan, commercial fishermen "started hauling in more Fraser River sockeye than any of them had ever seen."

Generally speaking, scientists and environmentalists are well aware of why



**Some 34 million sockeye salmon returned to Canada's Fraser River this past summer and fall, following years of decline that had many scientists worried about the future of the fish and the industry built around it. There is now great optimism for better times ahead. (Photo by John Warrenchuck, Wikipedia)**

wild West Coast salmon runs have been declining over the past century: namely pollution at almost every inch along the thousand mile river-to-sea-and-back underwater journey, overfishing in both rivers and the ocean, and man-made obstructions to fish passage.

But environmentalists are now optimistic that the huge 2010 sockeye run is a sign of better times ahead. Perhaps improved logging practices, a resurgence in organic farming, new protections for upstream habitat or restrained commercial fishing catch limits—or some combination thereof—has begun to make a difference in salmon survival.

In any event, the salmon runs typically peak every fourth year—2010

was supposed to be a peak year but substantially exceeded expectations. Only time will tell if the masses of sockeyes in the Fraser in 2010 were a fluke or foreshadow better days ahead for the environment—and for the fish and people in it.

**CONTACTS:** John Reynolds, [www.sfu.ca/biology/faculty/reynolds/The\\_Reynolds\\_Lab/](http://www.sfu.ca/biology/faculty/reynolds/The_Reynolds_Lab/); *Geophysical Research Letters*, [www.agu.org/journals/gl/](http://www.agu.org/journals/gl/); *Crosscut*, [www.crosscut.com](http://www.crosscut.com).

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**NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS**

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

**City Council approves South Waterfront projects**

The Portland City Council approved two new major projects for the South Waterfront neighborhood last month.

One was a long-sought affordable housing project, to be located on Block 49 of the district, bounded by Southwest Lowell and Bancroft streets and Moody and Bond avenues.

The six-story building will have 209 units. Of these, 42 will be reserved for veterans earning 30 percent or less of median family income. The rest will be geared to people earning 60 percent of MFI.

The City Council approved a grant of \$30 million toward the \$49.8 million, of which \$7 million has already been committed in the purchase of the land.

The project will be built and managed by REACH Community Development, the city's largest non-profit housing agency based in southeast Portland.

The veterans housing was originally supposed to be part of a project by Homer Williams and Dyke Dame, two of the major South Waterfront developers, but they eventually withdrew from the project.

The City Council also approved \$27 million in urban renewal funds for the reconstruction of Moody Avenue between Southwest Gibbs Street and River Parkway, a distance of 0.6 miles.

This will include an increase in the grade of the street, necessary for it to fit with the new light rail station at Southwest Porter Street, project manager Chris Armes told *The Post*.

**Citywide Tree Project reaches City Council**

The Portland City Council will hold a public hearing on the Citywide Tree Project beginning at 6 p.m. February 2 at City Hall.

The Project will set new regulations for the planting, cutting and pruning of trees on all public and private property in Portland.

It will hopefully make such regulations more consistent and understandable, with better enforcement, than is now the case. For more information visit [www.portlandonline.com/bps/treeproject](http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/treeproject).

**Southwest sewer work complete but new water main is next**

Good news for Multnomah and Garden Home residents: The sewer work that bedeviled these communities is complete. New sewers on Southwest Multnomah Boulevard and near the Fanno

Creek Trail were tested and found to be satisfactory, according to Bureau of Environmental Services spokesperson Stephen Sykes.

Now for the bad news – BES will need to relocate a water main on a section of Multnomah Boulevard, between Southwest 31st and 45th avenues. Work should begin in late December or early January and occur mainly between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m., Sykes said.

**Southwest coalition awards neighborhood grants**

Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. announced last month the Neighborhood Grant winners for this year, to whom they allocated a total of \$10,647. The winners were (in alphabetical order):

- Ash Creek Neighborhood Association - \$1,100 for outreach for the Dickinson Park Community Garden.
- Crestwood Neighborhood Association: \$1,100 for a movie night at Dickinson Park.
- Hayhurst Neighborhood Association and Cedar Sinai Park: \$565 for Southwest Boundary Road traffic calming.
- Homestead Neighborhood Association: \$734 for outreach.
- Maplewood Neighborhood Association - \$1,000 for a summer social.
- Marshall Park Neighborhood Association - \$112 for outreach efforts such as a National Night Out celebration and tree stewardship.
- Multnomah Neighborhood Association: \$450 for Multnomah Village Park improvements and the Spring Garden Park playground.
- South Portland Neighborhood Association: \$998 for activities to build neighborhood identity, including Willamette Park summer concerts.

- Southwest Crime Prevention Committee: \$1,200 for public safety outreach activities, including the "Whoopin' It Up" youth basketball program.

- Tryon Creek Watershed Council: \$1,200 for an event, including hands-on restoration activities.

The annual grant program is funded by the City General Fund through the Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement, and distributed by Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI) and the city's six other district neighborhood offices.

Grants are awarded for special projects by community groups that "increase their capacity," involve "under-represented communities," and encourage partnerships.

**We ran out of room for our calendar!**

Read "Community Life" online beginning January 1st.

Just click on our news website link at [www.swportlandpost.com](http://www.swportlandpost.com)

Happy New Year from all of us at The Post!



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# Will a streetcar from Portland to Lake Oswego cost \$458 million?

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

Slogging through the suddenly cost-sensitive alternatives before them, a Citizen Advisory Committee studying the proposed Lake Oswego to Portland transit project seemed last month to have agreed on one thing: doing nothing is not a viable option.

Under study since 2007, and a focus of debate among the affected South Portland, Dunthorpe and Lake Oswego communities, the proposed transit project suddenly received wider attention last month with the publication of the required Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

This showed the construction costs of the two options now under consideration: an "enhanced bus" route for \$51.1 million, or an extension of the Portland Streetcar route from its current terminus on Southwest Lowell Street for anywhere from \$379.1 to \$458 million.

So stated, for many, including some local editors, the choice was a no-brainer. Streetcar advocates claimed this didn't tell the whole story.

For one thing, the streetcar price tag, compiled for the sake of the Federal Transit Administration (from

whom Metro hopes to obtain 60 percent of project funding), includes the cost of the old Willamette Shore Rail Line right of way, valued at \$95 to \$97 million, which is already publicly owned.

The line was acquired in 1988 for \$2 million. If the FTA agrees to provide 60 percent of the funding, as Metro will request, the cost to the region will be between \$57 and \$86 million.

Further, as consultant Doug Obletz told the CAC, the streetcar would cost just \$1.25 million more to operate than current buses, compared to \$2.79 more for the enhanced bus.

"TriMet is strapped for operating dollars, and here the cost is low compared to many projects," he said.

For streetcar advocates, the biggest bonuses are ridership and economic stimulus. A streetcar on this route is expected to increase transit ridership by 1.18 to 1.28 million more trips per year, depending on the alignment used, compared to 730,000 for the enhanced bus.

As Beverly Bookin, a consultant representing the John's Landing Owners Association, said, "In neighborhoods that have streetcar service, property values are increasing vis-à-vis those that don't. People are less likely to invest in property that has transit service that can disappear at the whim of a transit agency."

For some Lake Oswego critics this is their point: the service will bring more urbanization than they want. One recent e-mail claimed completion of the route would result in development "equal to 17 Washington Squares."

Obletz said such critics were using faulty figures; under existing zoning the maximum possible buildout in affected parts of the suburb would be about 11 million square feet, not 30 million as advertised.

Metro's Jamie Snook commented, "Rarely is any land developed to maximum potential. Obletz added, "The city of Lake Oswego gets to decide its development potential, the streetcar doesn't dictate it."

Is Metro safe in assuming the feds will pay for 60 percent of the project? Critics pointed to the \$1.5 billion Portland to Milwaukie light rail line, where the FTA is offering only 50 percent and project backers have had to scramble to find the rest.

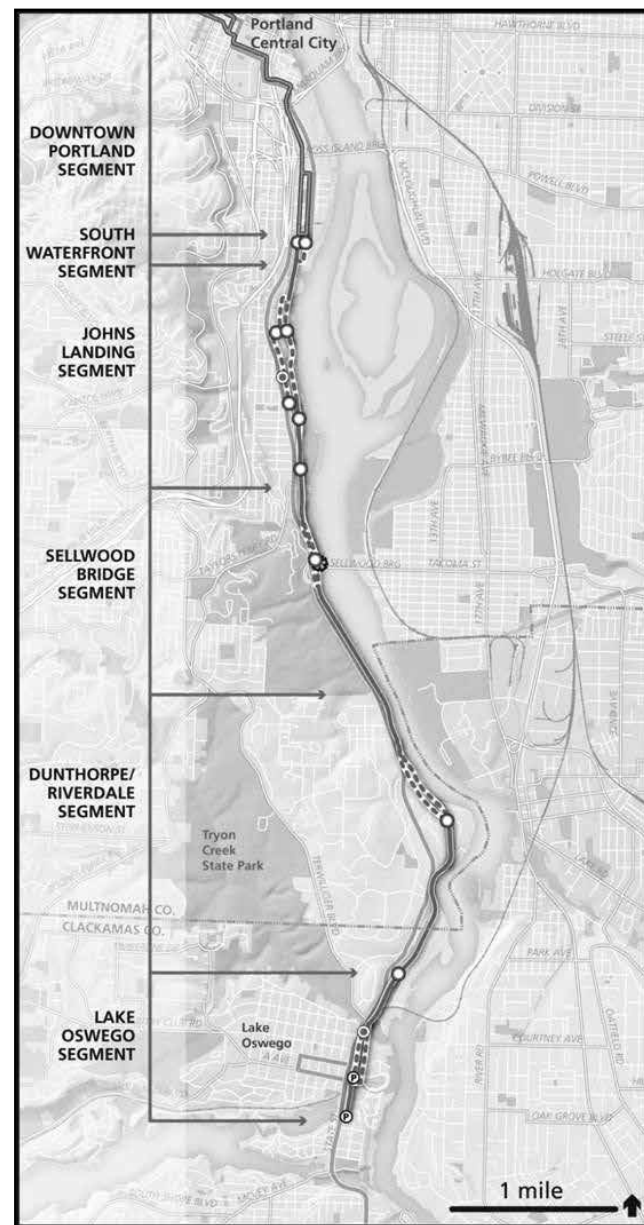
Obletz said the FTA is "moving toward 50 percent for very large projects. Streetcars are another matter. Right now there's no guidance this won't get 50 percent."

TriMet planner Joe Recker added, "There are no other (streetcar) projects that asked for 60 percent funding and didn't get it." Obletz did concede that until a deal is finalized, local funds spent on the project in the expectation of re-imbursement are "at risk."

Most of the CAC testimony last month called for removing the No Build option, which the FTA requires as part of the evaluation, from the table. Developer and Streetcar Board member Vern Rifer said, "No Build is an attempt to pretend that the present and the future are not true. There's a desire of people and companies to be near services and transit. Those cities that are successful are accommodating that need. Those that don't, like Las Vegas and Phoenix, are suffering and will continue to do so."

Former Portland transportation planner Matt Brown, now representing Lake Oswego interests, called No Build "the head in the sand option. It pretends the Macadam corridor works fine today, and that future demand can be easily accommodated with existing service."

CAC chair Ellie McPeak said, "No Build serves current bus users just fine, or they wouldn't be using it. It doesn't speed the journey, so those seeking faster service won't ride."



Portland Streetcar stops at Gibbs Street in the South Waterfront neighborhood. (flickr file photo courtesy of pchurch)



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The streetcar will make the Lake Oswego to downtown an estimated 10 minutes faster than existing bus service.

Andrew Franklin said he favored No Build "because it's the only option that supports transit in my neighborhood." To this Obletz responded, "The committee should keep in mind that if an additional stop is needed, it should certainly be brought forward."

Lydia Lipman argued that the streetcar route is simply an attempt to justify the purchase of the Willamette Shore right of way. "If we didn't have the right of way, this is the last place we'd be looking at a streetcar route," she said.

Three citizens spoke, including newly elected Lake Oswego City Councilman Jeff Goodman, all critical of the streetcar route.

The CAC will take up the streetcar versus enhanced bus issue at its next meeting, 5 p.m. January 11, at a location unavailable at press time. They are expected to make their final recommendations on February 8.

For South Portland residents and businesses the big question is, assuming a streetcar is chosen, exactly what route should it take?

Transportation planners favor using as much of the Willamette Shore route as possible, since this would be the cheapest and fastest.

The South Portland Neighborhood Association and Business Association would prefer it to use Southwest Macadam Avenue in their part of town. This, they argue, would have the least impact on existing homes and the most beneficial economic impact on potential future development.



# Willamette Greenway plans criticized by design commission

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

The Portland Design Commission reviewed plans in December for the South Waterfront section of the Willamette Greenway trail. The PDC repeated the complaints long voiced by area residents: too much attention to natural habitat, not enough to human amenities.

The South Waterfront part of the Greenway, 1.2 miles long by 100 feet wide, had always been envisioned as a combination of public amenities and natural habitat.

There will be two separated public trails, one for pedestrians and one for bicyclists. There will be a

wide lawn at the foot of Southwest Gibbs Street, east of the Aerial Tram landing.

The debris-laden shoreline will be reconstructed as shallow water before a beach rising gradually to higher land. However, plans for a boat dock, and most public access to the water's edge, have been scrapped.

Planner Kara Fioravanti said this was done at the insistence of the National Marine Fisheries Service, which fears that a dock could create a hiding place for predators that feed on young fish.

"Those interested in protecting fish want to limit human access, and they're very adamant," she said. "We had a very different plan in

mind. Frankly, the federal agencies said they weren't interested."

This did not satisfy Commission members. David Wark said, "There will be thousands of people here, and there's not even limited access to the river; there's no access. Can't there be a balance?"

Commission member Ben Kaiser said, "We have a goal to 'embrace the river,' and if not here, where? The entire city wants a different solution, but one agency will wipe it all out."

Commission member David Keltner told Fioravanti, "The amount of work you've done on restoring natural habitat is going unrewarded. (Federal agencies) are not giving back anything."

Commission chair Gwen Millius said, "NMS has said we have too many docks, and unless some come out we can't have any more. There is a tension between interests and we have to respect that, but I don't think it's balanced fairly now."

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## Design commission approves new light rail bridge design



Conceptual images of the new Portland to Milwaukie light rail bridge. (TriMet)

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

The Portland Design Commission last month unanimously approved a new Willamette River bridge that will carry the proposed Portland to Milwaukie light rail line. The bridge is a key part of the \$1.5 billion project.

Starting at the current Green Line terminus at Portland State University, the line will travel through the South Waterfront to Southwest Sherman Street, cross to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, and travel through inner Southeast Portland to Milwaukie and Oak Grove in Clackamas County.

At a session two months before, the Commission had asked for minor changes, and Portland Bureau of Development Services staff had called for additional review in the future.

This time planner Tim Heron said, "All the issues raised by the Commission have been addressed," and recommended approval. This included the color of the concrete to be used ("natural, not white").

One of the few issues Commission members raised was the west side bike access ramps. Rather than the sweeping circles seen on other bridges, these will be tight switchbacks, which will compel bicyclists to go slower.

TriMet consultant Sean Batty said this was dictated by the limited space available, and was done at the urging of the Oregon Health and Sciences University and the Zidel Corporation, who donated the land for the bridge.

He added that there is virtue in causing cyclists to slow when they are entering an area shared by pedestrians.

Brian Newman of OHSU and Rick Saito of Zidel confirmed this. Newman said that OHSU will be attempting to relocate its Medical, Dental and Health schools to six square blocks of the new campus, and the bridge will make this a very tight fit.

Negotiations with the TriMet team were "not always pleasant, but everyone had their eyes on the prize," he told the Commission. The end result "leaves the public with something they can be very proud of," he said.

Batty reported that the Kiewit Company's bid to construct the bridge was \$7 million below previous estimates, \$127 million instead of \$134 million.

To the delight of the Commission, he said that this allows TriMet to restore some features that were eliminated as cost-cutting moves, including a wide place in the pedestrian path that will allow visitors to pause, admire the scenery and take pictures without interfering with pedestrian or bike traffic.

The bridge even has at its bottom

designed to serve as nesting sites for birds of prey. "Peregrine falcons on the west (left?), ospreys on the (east?) right," Batty said tongue in cheek.

Commission members enthusiastically praised the project. "The design is beautiful and well-thought-out down to condor condos," Ben Kaiser said.

TriMet will provide bike lockers on the west end, and Commission chair Gwen Millius urged them to provide enough. Beyond this, she said the refinements have "changed this from a serviceable bridge to something really awesome."



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